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PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT

MADE SCIENCE IN EARNEST

PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT

MADE

SCIENCE IN EARNEST.

'Tis not enough that Greek and Roman page
At stated hours the sprightly boy engage;
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value, not to be erased,
On moments, squander'd else, and running all to waste.

COWPER'S *Tirocinium.*

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORK.

FRONTISPIECE.

The authenticity of the Vicar's favourite coin is questioned by Major Snapwell.—*See page* 148.

PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT

MADE

SCIENCE IN EARNEST:

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO IMPLANT IN THE YOUNG MIND
THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY
BY THE AID OF THE POPULAR TOYS AND
SPORTS OF YOUTH.

BY J. A. PARIS, M.D., F.R.S.,
LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

Ninth Edition.

LONDON:
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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·
DOMI NUS ILLU MINATIO MEA

TO

MICHAEL FARADAY, D.C.L., OXON., F.R.S.,

FULLERIAN PROFESSOR IN THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

ETC., ETC.,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED, not only in admiration of his great scientific discoveries, but in grateful acknowledgment of services more immediately relating to the design and object of the present work—that of implanting and cherishing an early love of Science, by enlisting under its banners the curiosity and imagination of the rising generation,—a plan which he has greatly promoted by the delivery of "JUVENILE LECTURES," alike remarkable for the happy selection and arrangement of their subjects, the winning familiarity of their style, and the striking and beautiful simplicity of their experimental illustrations:

By his Friend,

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *December* 1856.

TO THE READER.

Tell me, gentle Reader, whether thou hast not heard of the box of Pandora, which was no sooner opened by the unhappy Epimetheus, than it gave flight to a troop of malevolent spirits, which have ever since tormented the human race.—Behold!—I here present you with a magic casket containing a genius alone capable of counteracting their direful spells. Perchance thou mayst say that its aspect but ill accords with the richness of its promised treasure; so appeared the copper vessel found by the fisherman, as related in the Arabian tale; but remember, that no sooner had he broken its mystic seal, than the imprisoned genius spread itself over the ocean and raised its giant limbs above the clouds. But this was an evil and treacherous spirit; mine is as benevolent as he is mighty, and seeks communion with our race for no other object than to render mortals virtuous and happy. To be plain, my young friends, if you have not already unriddled my allegory, his name is—Philosophy.

In your progress through life, be not so vain as to believe that you will escape the evils with which its path is beset. Arm yourselves, therefore, with the talisman that can, at once, deprive adversity of its sting, and prosperity of its dangers; for such, believe me, is the rare privilege of Philosophy.

I must now take leave of you for a short time, in order that I may address a few words to your parents and preceptors; but as I have no plot to abridge your liberties, or lengthen your hours of study, you may listen to my address without alarm, and to my plan without suspicion. Imagine not, however, that I shall so far disregard the admonition of Solomon, as to advocate the dismissal of the cane or the whip; on the contrary, I shall insist upon them as necessary and indispensable implements for the accomplishment of my design: but the method of applying them will be changed; with the one I shall construct the bow of the kite, with the other I shall spin the top.

The object of the present work is to inculcate that early love of science which can never be derived from the sterner productions. Youth is naturally addicted to amusement, and in this item his expenditure too often exceeds his allotted income. I have, therefore, taken the liberty to draw a draft upon Philosophy, with the full assurance that it will be gratefully repaid, with compound interest, ten years after date. But to be serious: those who superintend the education of youth should be apprised of the great importance of first impressions. From the leaf-bud, as Goethe says, springs the future tree with its crowning flowers and fruit, and unless that be cared for, there is an end of the preordained development. Rousseau has said that the seeds of future vices or virtues are more frequently sown by the mother than by the tutor; thereby intimating that the characters of men are often determined by the earliest impressions; and of so much moment did Quintilian regard this truth, that he recommends to us the example of Philip, who did not suffer any other than Aristotle to teach Alexander to read. In like manner, those who do not commence their study of nature at an early season, will afterwards have many unnecessary obstacles to encounter. The difficulty of comprehending the principles of Natural Philosophy frequently arises from their being at variance with those false ideas which early associations have impressed upon the mind; the first years of study are therefore expended in *un*learning, and in clearing away the weeds, which would never have taken root in a properly-cultivated soil. "To enter into the kingdom of knowledge," said Lord Bacon, "we must put on the spirit of little children.' Nor is it of less importance to disabuse the young mind of the fallacies to which the senses are exposed; and for that purpose, the several optical and acoustic amusements will prove instructive auxiliaries.

Writers on practical education have repeatedly advocated the advantages of the plan I am so anxious to enforce; but, strange to say, it is only within a few years that any works have appeared at all calculated to afford the necessary assistance.* In short, previous to the labours of Mrs Marcet and Miss Edgeworth, the productions published for the purpose of juvenile instruction may be justly charged with the grossest errors; and must have proved as destructive to the mind of the young reader as the book presented by the physician Douban is said to have been to the Grecian king, who, as the Arabian tale relates, imbibed fresh poison as he turned over each leaf, until he fell lifeless in the presence of his courtiers; or, to give another illustration,—as mischievous as the magic volume of Michael Scott, which, as Dempster informs us, could not be opened without the danger of invoking some malignant fiend by the operation.

> " Henceforth let all young men take heed
> How in a conjuror's book they read."†

How infinitely superior in execution and purpose are the juvenile works of the present century!—To borrow a metaphor from Coleridge, they may be truly said to resemble a collection of mirrors set in the same frame, each having its own focus of knowledge, yet all capable of converging to one point.

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* It is gratifying to learn that so distinguished a philosopher as Sir David Brewster has given his sanction to the plan. In his recently-published work on the "History of the Stereoscope" he observes that "Philosophy in Sport" never fails to become "Science in Earnest." The toy which amuses the boy will instruct the sage; and many an eminent discoverer and inventor can trace the pursuits which immortalize them to some experiment or instrument which amused them at school. The soap-bubble, the kite, the balloon, the water-wheel, the sun-dial, the burning-glass, the magnet, &c., have all been valuable incentives to the study of the sciences.

† *Southey's Minor Poems.*

Allow me, friendly Reader, before I conclude my address, to say a few words upon the plan and execution of the work before you. It is not intended to supersede or clash with any of the elementary treatises to which I have alluded; indeed, its plan is so peculiar, that I apprehend such a charge cannot be brought against it. The author originally composed it for the exclusive use of his children, and would certainly never have consigned it to the press, but at the earnest solicitations of those friends who thought that it might serve the cause of early scientific education, and inaugurate a school of domestic instruction. The success of the plan has exceeded our expectation, and *Philosophy in Sport made Science in Earnest*, have become "Household Words." Let this be received as an answer to those who, believing that they can recognise the writer, may be induced to exclaim with Menedemus in Terence,—"*Tantumne est ab re tuâ otii tibi aliena ut cures, eaque nihil quæ ad te attinent?*"* Its French translator † regrets that he is unable to give the name of the English author; while, by not withholding his own, he affords me the gratifying opportunity of identifying M. Richard as the person to whom I am obliged for the ability with which he has executed a difficult undertaking. Addison, I believe, has said that "a *Pun* can be no more translated than it can be engraved;" I can therefore readily pardon the Professor for having lopped off at least three-fourths of my kite's *tail*, to say nothing of sundry other mutilations; it is true, indeed, that he has offered compensation, by the introduction of many clever *calembourgs* and smart *jeux-de-mot*. My American Editor had not that difficulty to encounter, and I only regret that he did not enliven some of its passages with the humour so characteristic of the country of Sam Slick.

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* "Have you such leisure from
your own affairs
To think of those that don't
concern you?"

† *La Science enseignée par les Jeux:* imité de l'Anglais, par *T. Richard*, Professeur de Mathématiques. *Paris, à la Librairie Encyclopédique de Roret Rue Hautefeuille.*

In composing a scientific work for elementary instruction, nothing is more difficult than to conceive a standard of information so nicely adjusted as shall explain without being too profound, and instruct without being too superficial. Upon such an occasion its author is pretty much in the predicament of an usher when taking his younger pupils on a bathing-excursion; who has to avoid the brook as too shallow for recreation, and the pool as too deep for safety; but this difficulty did not press very heavily upon the author of a work, the very structure of which implied a compact between the tutor and his pupil; whereby the former was ever at hand to clear away any difficulty that might beset the latter. Nor was it unreasonable to hope that his "*fidus Achates*," by deviating from the direct road of his ordinary pursuits, might pick up from the untrodden wayside some special novelties to be deposited in his treasury of knowledge.

It is very far from my intention to revive what St Jerome has termed the "Prologus Galeatus"—the Preface with a helmet—and thus, as it were, to hold forth an armed defiance to every critical assailant; but thus much I may be permitted to say, that from the fact of having for the eighth time passed through the press, this little work must have disarmed such dissentients as maintained that the public would never tolerate, and still less adopt, an alliance so incongruous and ill-concerted as that between SCIENCE and SPORT. That should Sport, even in a lucky hour, overtake and apprehend the goddess, he could only hope, in *Cinderella* fashion, to capture her slipper, or at most to retain in his grasp the mere skirts of her robe, to make himself withal a cap for jingling bells; she herself vanish-ing in air, even as did Helen in her flight from Faust, leaving nought but her vest and veil behind.

It is scarcely necessary to offer any apology for the conversational plan of instruction: the success of Mrs Marcet's dialogues has placed its value beyond dispute. It may, however, be observed, that this species of composition may be executed in two different ways,—either as direct conversation, where none but the speakers appear, which is the method used by Plato; or as the recital of a conversation, where the author himself appears, and gives an account of what passed in discourse, which is the plan generally adopted by Cicero. The reader is aware that Mrs Marcet, in her "Conversations on Philosophy," has adopted the former, while Miss Edgeworth, in her "Harry and Lucy," has preferred the latter method. In composing the present work, I have followed the plan of the last-mentioned authoress. Its advantage over the more direct conversational style consists in allowing occasional remarks, which come more aptly from the author than from any of the characters engaged; indeed, the formalities of the dialogue are necessarily opposed to any deviations from an appointed course, and must thereby exclude much useful information, and many instructive anecdotes, that might otherwise be incidentally introduced.

If scientific dialogues are less popular in our times than they were in ancient days, it must be attributed to the frigid and insipid manner in which they have too frequently been executed: if we except the mere external forms of speech, and that one character is made to question magisterially, and the other to fashion an answer according to order, they are altogether the same as if the author himself had *ventriloquized* through a set of *lay-figures;* instead of amusing with a varied style of conversation, and a display of consistent and well-sustained characters, with appropriate incidents and instructive episodes. The introduction of a person of humour to enliven the discourse, is sanctioned by the highest authority. Cæsar is thus introduced by Cicero, and Cynthio by Addison. In the introduction of Mr Twaddleton and Major Snapwell, I am well aware of the criticisms to which I am exposed. I have exercised my fancy with a freedom and latitude for which, probably, there is not any precedent in a scientific work; and have even ventured so far to deviate from the beaten track as to skirmish upon the frontiers of the Novelist, and to bring off captive some of the artillery of Romance: but if, by so doing, I have enhanced the interest of my work, and furthered the accomplishment of its object, let me entreat that mere novelty may not be urged to its disparagement. The antiquarian Vicar, however, will I trust meet with a cordial reception from the classical student.* As to Ned Hopkins, although he may not bear a comparison with William Summers, the Fool of Henry the Eighth, or with Archibald Armstrong (*vulgo* Archie), Jester to Charles, or much less with that popular court Droll, Richard Tarleton, who "*undumphished* Queen Elizabeth at his pleasure;" and although the Nymph of the Dairy may never have bestowed upon Ned Hopkins that "flattering *unction*" she had so gracefully imparted to the unrivalled † Tarleton, by stamping his image on her pats of butter, recalling to the classical mind the idea of "*Oscilla*" and votive tablets, nor "mine host" have displayed his rubicund face on the alehouse sign, as surety for "*Merry entertainment within*," yet will I maintain, against all comers, despite the Vicar's censure, that he is a very meritorious personage, brimful of humour—an expert minister of fun and frolic to the Major—and consequently to our history a very important accessary. Should any of my readers be old enough to remember "*Jemmy Gordon*," of Cambridge notoriety, they will not consider the character overdrawn; nor will those who have made acquaintance with the eccentric brother of the artist Gainsborough regard the mercurial genius of Tom Plank as beyond the mark of probability.

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* It is at least satisfactory to know that Miss Edgeworth, no mean authority, has expressed her approbation of this character. In a letter addressed to the author, she says, "As you may wish to know what pleased me particularly, I will mention the character of the antiquarian Vicar and Tom Plank, both which are the means of introducing much amusing and useful information in an appropriate manner: and," she adds, "I wish to express my gratitude for the manner in which you have exemplified my father's principles."

† We willingly admit that, in one respect at least, our friend Hopkins rivalled the Elizabethan jester in "*speaking by the card*" (see p. 259). In allusion to the favours heaped upon Raleigh and Leicester, the court wit imprudently observed that a "*Knave always commanded the Queen*" and he paid the just penalty of the unmannerly jest by an instant dismissal from the royal presence.

I will only add that, to carry forward a consistent story with success, the ideal characters, as Swift says, should be alive and talking to you, each according to his humour, and should a spice of *nonsense* be occasionally infused, it will not only be the more natural, but, as Miss Edgeworth thought, might act like the alloy in our coin, and give to sterling sense a more lasting currency; and be it moreover observed, that certain details and levities, otherwise perhaps exceptionable, are, in fact, the spells which confer that air of truthful life so necessary to sustain the reader during the progress of a tale, in a rational belief of its realities; and that however frivolous or irrelevant they may sometimes appear on the surface, they will not unfrequently be found to cover a concealed under-current, which is carrying along with it an instructive moral, or some contribution to the general stock of historical and scientific information.

As to the propriety of calling in Allegory as an occasional handmaid to Science, I have elsewhere remarked (p. 152), that the genius of fiction very often realises the beneficent doings of the "Good Fairy" of our infant tales, by serving the student without even his consciousness, much less his participation, and by thus imparting instruction without exacting an equivalent in labour.

If it be argued that several of my comic representations are calculated, like seasoning, to stimulate the palate of the novel-reader, rather than to nourish the minds of the younger class, for whom the work was written, I answer once for all, that we are not studying in the "*Academia vetus*," in which laughter was forbidden. I might, besides, without seeking shelter under the mantle of Horace,* plead common usage; for does not the director of a juvenile *fête* courteously introduce a few piquant dishes for the entertainment of those elder personages who may attend in the character of chaperone? and for whom, I think, I can promise that the Christmas-tree shall scatter from its time-honoured branches some flowers worthy of their acceptance; but at all events you cannot deny me the full benefit of the precedent I have pleaded—and so, gentle Reader, in full confidence of your favour, I respectfully bid thee—Farewell!

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* Sat. i. l. 25, and Sat. x. v. 14.

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PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT.

CHAPTER I.

THE summer recess of Mr Pearson's school was not more anxiously anticipated by the scholars than by the numerous family of Seymour, who, at the commencement of the year, had parted from a beloved son and brother for the first time. As the season of relaxation approached, so did the inmates of Overton Lodge (for such was the name of Mr Seymour's seat) betray increasing impatience for its arrival. The three elder sisters, Louisa, Fanny, and Rosa, had been engaged for several days in arranging the little study which their brother Tom had usually occupied. His books were carefully replaced on their shelves, and bunches of roses and jasmines, which the affectionate girls had culled from the finest flower-beds in the garden, were tastefully dispersed through the apartment; the festoons of blue ribands, with which they were entwined, at once announced themselves as the work of graceful hands impelled by light hearts; and every flower might be said to reflect from its glowing petals the smiles with which it had been collected and arranged. At length the happy day arrived; a carriage drew up to the gate, and Tom was once again folded in the arms of his affectionate and delighted parents. The little group surrounded their beloved brother, and welcomed his return with all the warmth and artlessness of juvenile sincerity. "Well," said Mr Seymour, "if the improvement of your mind corresponds with that of your looks, I shall indeed have reason to congratulate myself upon the choice of your school. But have you brought me any letter from Mr Pearson?" "I have," replied Tom, who presented his father with a note from his master, in which he had dwelt, in high terms of commendation, not only upon the general conduct of his pupil, but upon the rapid progress he had made in his classical studies.

"My dearest boy," exclaimed the delighted father, "I am more than repaid for the many anxious moments which I have passed on your account. I find that your conduct has given the highest satisfaction to your master; and that your good-nature, generosity, and, above all, your strict adherence to truth, have insured the love and esteem of your schoolfellows." This gratifying report brought tears of joy into the eyes of Mrs Seymour; Tom's cheeks glowed with the feeling of merited approbation, and the sisters interchanged looks of mutual satisfaction. Can there be an incentive to industry and virtuous conduct more powerful than the exhilarating smiles of approval which the schoolboy receives from an affectionate parent? Tom would not have exchanged his feelings for all the world; and he internally vowed that he would never deviate from a course that had been productive of so much happiness.

"But come," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "let us all retire into the library. I am sure that our dear fellow will be glad of some refreshment after his journey."

We shall here leave the family circle to the undisturbed enjoyment of their domestic repast, and invite the reader to accompany us in a stroll about the grounds of this beautiful and secluded retreat.

We are amongst those who believe that the habits and character of a family may be as easily discovered by the rural taste displayed in the grounds which surround their habitation, as by any examination of the prominences on their heads, or of the lineaments in their faces. How vividly is the decline of an ancient race depicted by the chilling desolation which reigns around the mansion, and by the rank weed which insolently triumphs over its fading splendour; and how equally expressive of the peaceful and contented industry of the thriving cottager, is the well-cultivated patch which adjoins the humble dwelling, around whose rustic porch the luxuriant lilac-clusters, or the aspiring woodbine twines its green tendrils and sweetly-scented blossoms! In like manner did the elegantly-disposed grounds of Overton Lodge at once announce the classic taste and fostering presence of a refined and highly-cultivated family.

The house, which was in the Ionic style of architecture, was situated on the declivity of a hill, so that the verdant lawn which was spread before its southern front, after retaining its level for a short distance, gently sloped to the vale beneath, and was terminated by a luxuriant shrubbery, over which the eye commanded a range of fair enclosures, beautified by an irregularly-undulating surface, and interspersed with rich masses of wood. The uniformity of the smoothly-shorn lawn was broken by occasional clumps of flowering shrubs, so artistically selected and arranged, as to afford all the varied charms of contrast; while, here and there, a lofty elm flung its gigantic arms over the sward beneath, which enabled the inhabitants of the Lodge, like the philosophers of old, to converse in the shade, or to enjoy the luxury of "lettered ease," even during the heat of a meridian sun. The shrubbery, which occupied a considerable portion of the valley, stretched for some distance up the western part of the hill; and could Shenstone have wandered through its winding paths and deep recesses, his own Leasowes might have suffered from a comparison. Here were mingled shrubs of every varied dye: the elegant foliage of white and scarlet acacias was blended with the dark-green-leaved chestnut; and the stately branches of the oak were relieved by the gracefully-pendulous boughs of the birch. At irregular intervals, the paths expanded into verdant glades, in each of which the bust of some favourite poet or philosopher announced the genius to which they were severally consecrated. From a description of one or two of these sequestered spots, the reader will readily conceive the taste displayed in all.

After winding, for some distance, through a path so closely interwoven with shrubs and trees, that scarcely a sunbeam could struggle through the foliage, a gleam of light suddenly burst through the gloom, and displayed a beautiful marble figure, which had been executed by a Roman artist, representing Flora in the act of being attired by Spring. It was placed in the centre of the expanse formed by the retiring trees, and at its base were flowering, at measured intervals, a variety of those plants to which Linnæus has given the name of *Equinoctial Flowers*, since they open and close at certain and exact hours of the day, and thus by proper arrangement constitute the HOROLOGE OF FLORA (1),* or Nature's timepiece. It had been constructed, under the direction of her mother, by Louisa Seymour. The hour of the day at which each plant opened or closed was represented by an appropriate figure of nicely-clipped box; and these, being arranged in a circle, not only fulfilled the duty, but exhibited the appearance of a dial. Adjoining the circle stood a sundial, upon the pedestal of which was inscribed a motto, equally applicable to either of these heralds of the sun—"*Horas non numero, nisi serenas.*" Under which appeared the following paraphrase:—

"So let us note those hours alone
On which the sun of joy has shone,
And leave unmark'd the sunless past,
O'er which the shade of sorrow 's cast."

From this retreat several winding paths threaded their mazy way through the deep recesses of the wood; and the wanderer, quitting for a while the blaze of day, was refreshed by the subdued light which everywhere pervaded the avenue, except where the hand of taste had, here and there, turned aside the boughs, and opened a sunny vista to bring the village spire into view, or to gladden the sight by a rich prospect of the distant landscape. After having descended for some way, the path, losing its inclined direction, proceeded on a level, and thus announced to the stranger his arrival at the bottom of the valley.

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* These figures refer to the additional notes at the end of the work.

What a rich display of woodland scenery was suddenly presented to his view! A rocky glen, in which large masses of sandstone were grouped with picturesque boldness, terminated the path, and formed an area wherein he might gaze on the mighty sylvan amphitheatre, which gradually rose to a towering height above him, and seemed to interpose an insuperable barrier between the solitude of this sequestered spot and the busy haunts of men; not a sound assailed the ear, save the murmur of the summer breeze, as it swept the trembling foliage, or the brawling of a small mountain stream, which gushed from the rock, and, like an angry chit, fretted and fumed as it encountered the obstacles that had been raised by its own impetuosity. This was the favourite retreat of Mr Seymour, and he had dedicated it to the genius of geology: here had he erected a temple to the memory of Werner, and every pillar and ornament bore testimony to the refined taste of its architect. It consisted of a dome, constructed of innumerable shells and corallines, and surmounted by a marble figure of Atlas, bearing the globe on his shoulders, upon which the name of WERNER was inscribed. The dome was supported by twelve pillars of so singular and beautiful a construction as to merit a particular description: the Corinthian capital of each was of Pentelican marble; the column consisted of a spiral of about six inches in breadth, which wound round a central shaft of not more than two inches in diameter; upon this spiral were placed specimens of various rocks, of such masses as to fill up the outline, and to present to the eye the appearance of a substantial and well-proportioned pillar. These specimens were arranged in an order corresponding with their acknowledged geological relations; thus, the *Diluvial* productions occupied the higher compartments; the *Primitive* strata the lower ones; and the *Secondary* and *Transition* series found intermediate places. The tessellated floor presented the different varieties of marble, so artfully interspersed as to afford a most harmonious combination; the *Unicoloured*, *variegated*, *Madreporic*, the *Lumachella*, *Cipolino*, and *Breccia* marbles, were each represented by a characteristic and well-defined specimen. The alcoved ceiling sparkled with *Rock Crystal*, interspersed with calcareous *Stalactites*, and beautiful *Chalcedonies*. A group of figures in *basso relievo* adorned the wall which enclosed about a third part of the interior of the temple, and its subject gave evidence of the Wernerian devotion of Mr Seymour; for it represented a contest between Pluto and Neptune, in which the watery god was seen in the act of wresting the burning torch from the hand of his adversary, in order to quench it in the ocean. Mr Seymour had studied in the school of Freyburg, under the auspices of its celebrated professor; and, like all the pupils of Werner, as in duty bound, he pertinaciously maintained the aqueous origin of our strata (2). But let us return to the happy party at the Lodge, whom the reader will remember we left at their repast. This having been concluded, and all those various subjects discussed, and questions answered, which the schoolboy, who has ever felt the satisfaction of returning home for the holidays, will more easily conceive than we can describe, Tom inquired of his father, whether his old friend, Mr Twaddleton, the vicar of Overton, was well, and at the Parsonage. "He is quite well," said Mr Seymour; "and so anxious has he been to see you, that he has paid several visits during the morning, to inquire whether you had yet arrived. Depend upon it, that many hours will not elapse before you see him."

In that wish did Tom and the whole juvenile party heartily concur; for the vicar, notwithstanding his oddities, was the most affectionate creature in existence, and never was he more truly happy than when contributing to the innocent amusement of his little "*playmates*," as he used to call Tom and his sisters.

It may be here necessary to present the reader with a short sketch of the character of a person who will be hereafter found to perform a prominent part in the little drama of Overton Lodge.

The Rev. Peter Twaddleton, Master of Arts, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, for we must introduce him in due form, was about fifty-six years of age, twenty of which he had spent at Cambridge, as a resident Fellow of Jesus College. He had not possessed the vicarage of Overton above eight or nine years; and although its annual value scarcely exceeded a hundred and eighty pounds, so limited were his wants, and so frugal his habits, that he generally contrived to save a considerable sum out of his income for the purposes of charity and benevolence: his charity, however, was not merely of the hand, but of the heart; distress was unknown in his village; he fed the hungry, instructed the ignorant, nursed the sick, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the unfortunate. His long collegiate residence had imparted to his mind several peculiar traits, and a certain stiffness of address and quaintness of manner which at once distinguish the recluse from the man of the world; in short, as Shakspeare expresses it, "*he was not hackney'd in the ways of men.*"

His habits of thought were peculiar, and he assimilated all the affairs of life to his own ideal abstractions; so that it might be said, he lived and moved, as it were, in a chequered world of his own creation, resenting as unhallowed intrusions all such views and opinions as did not strictly harmonise with its fancifully-imposed obligations. These remarks may serve to reconcile those apparent anomalies and contradictions which the reader will have to encounter as he follows in the track of this singular character, in which were united the cold pedantry of the antiquary with the warm fancy of the poet, the narrow prejudices of the recluse with the expansive liberality of the philosopher, and the sobriety of the priest with the playfulness of the schoolboy: guile he knew not; for, to adopt the expression of his amiable friend Mrs Seymour, "his heart was as simple, and as open, as the daisy in the morning sun."

His face was certainly anything but "good-looking," and yet, when he smiled, there was an animation and sweetness that redeemed the otherwise austere expression of his angular features; so benevolent indeed, and so winning was this smile, as at once to excite those sentiments of respect and admiration which the presence of a superior person is wont to inspire; but his superiority was rather that of the heart than of the head; not that we would insinuate any inferiority in intellect, but that his moral excellences were so transcendent as to throw into the shade all those mental qualities which he possessed in common with his class. He entertained a singular aversion to the mathematics, a prejudice which we are inclined to refer to his disappointment in the senate-house; for although he was known at Cambridge as one of those "pale beings in spectacles and cotton stockings," commonly called "*reading men*," yet, after all his exertions, he only succeeded in obtaining the "*wooden spoon*," an honour which devolves upon the last of the "*junior optimes*." Whether his failure arose from an exuberant or a deficient genius, or, to speak *phrenologically*, from an excess in his *number of bumps*, or a defect in his *bump of numbers*, we are really unable to state, never having had an opportunity of verifying our suspicions by a manual examination of his cranium; he was, however, deeply versed in classical literature, and so passionately devoted to Virgil, that he rarely lost an opportunity of quoting his favourite poet; and, although these quotations, vented in mangled forms, too generally pervaded his conversation, they were sometimes apposite, and now and then even witty. But, notwithstanding the delight which he experienced in a *lusus verborum* in a learned language, of such contradictory materials was he composed, that his antipathy to an *English* pun was bitter and inveterate, and the indignation it excited very frequently came into ludicrous contrast with the playful glee with which his friend Mr Seymour was ever ready to encourage and indulge in it. This peculiarity has been attributed, but we speak merely from common report, to a disgust which the vicar contracted for that species of spurious wit, during his frequent intercourse with the Johnians, a race of Cambridge students who have, from time immemorial, been identified with the most profligate class of punsters;* be this, however, as it may, we are inclined to believe that a person who resides much amongst those who are addicted to this *vice*, unless he quickly takes the infection, acquires a sort of constitutional insusceptibility, like nurses, who pass their lives in infected apartments with perfect safety and impunity. His favourite, and we might add his chief pursuit, beyond the circle of his profession, was the study of antiquities; he was, as we have already stated, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; had collected a very tolerable series of ancient coins, and possessed sufficient critical acumen to distinguish between Attic *ærugo* and the spurious *verdure* of the modern counterfeit. In short, he was a keen archæological mouser of the genuine breed, rejoicing in dusty nooks and damp mysterious cells. Often had he undertaken an expedition of a hundred miles to inspect the interior of an ancient barrow, or to examine the mouldering fragments of some newly-discovered monument; indeed, like the connoisseur in cheese, blue-mould and decay were the favourite objects of his taste, and the sure passports to his favour; for he despised all *living* testimony, but that of worms and maggots. A coin with the head of a *living* sovereign passed through his hands with as little resistance as water through a sieve, but he grasped the head of an Antonine or Otho with insatiable and relentless avarice. And yet would he, amidst some dry and dusky disquisition upon an obscure antiquarian question, suddenly startle and enliven you by a bright flash of poetic fancy, suggesting the idea of a gay wild flower springing from the crevices of a Gothic ruin. Mr Twaddleton's figure exceeded the middle stature, and was so extremely slender as to give him the air and appearance of a tall man. He was usually dressed in an old-fashioned suit of black cloth, consisting of a single-breasted coat, with a standing collar, and deep comprehensive cuffs, and a flapped waistcoat; but so awkwardly did these vestments conform with the contour of his person, that we might have supposed them the production of those Laputan tailors who wrought by mathematical principles, and held in sovereign contempt the illiterate fashioners who deemed it necessary to measure the forms of their customers; although it was whispered by certain censorious spinsters in the village that the aforesaid mathematical artists were better acquainted with the *angles* of the Seven Dials than with the *squares* of the West End. They farther surmised that the vicar's annual journey to London, which in truth was undertaken with no other objects than those of attending the anniversary of the Society of Antiquaries, on St George's day, and of inspecting the cabinets of the British Museum, and that of his old crony, the celebrated medalist of Tavistock Street, was for the laudable purpose of recruiting his wardrobe. If the aforesaid coat, with its straggling

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* It is not easy to conjecture the origin of this tradition, nor after considerable research can we discover the slightest clue to explain the sobriquet of *Hogs*, in which the members of Saint John's College have so long rejoiced. If the Johnians, however, are guiltless of the sin of punning, they have certainly been the cause of that sin in others; for instance, the bridge erected over the

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Cam, to connect the new and old courts, has been termed the "*Isthmus of Sues*"—and on the author passing over this bridge with Mr Coleridge, the latter observed that were a Johnian to hang himself upon it, the jury might well bring in a verdict, "*Sus per col.*"

and disproportioned suburbs, possessed an amplitude of dimensions which ill-accorded with the slender wants of his person, this misapplied liberality was more than compensated by the rigid economy exhibited in the *nether* part of his costume (the *innominabiles* of Southey), which evidently had not been designed by a contemporary artisan; not so his shoes, which, for the accommodation of those unwelcome parasites vulgarly called *corns*, were constructed in the form of a battledore, and, like those of the amiable sloven in Horace,* displayed such an unbecoming quantity of leather, that, as Ned Hopkins, a subaltern wit of the village alehouse, observed, "however economical their parson might appear, he was undoubtedly *supported in extravagance*." Nor did the natural association between tithes and "*corn-bags*" escape his observation, but was repeated with various other allusions of equal piquancy, to the no small annoyance of the reverend gentleman, and, as he complained, to the disparagement of his *cloth*.

After the social repast had been concluded, Tom proposed a ramble through the shrubbery. He was anxious to revisit the scene of his former sports; and Louisa readily met his wishes, for she was also desirous of showing him the *botanical clock*, which had been planned and completed during his absence. Mr and Mrs Seymour accompanied their children, and as they walked across the lawn, Tom asked his father whether he remembered the promise he had made him on quitting home for school, that of furnishing him with some new amusements during the holidays.

"I perfectly remember," said his father, "the promise to which you allude, and I hope that you equally well recollect the conditions with which it was coupled. When you received a copy of Mrs Marcet's instructive Dialogues on Natural Philosophy, I told you that, after you had studied the principles which that work so clearly explains, you would have but little difficulty in understanding the philosophy of toys, or the manner in which each produced its amusing effects; and that, when the midsummer holidays commenced, I would successively supply you with a new amusement, whenever you could satisfactorily explain the principles of those you already possessed. Was not that our compact?"

"It was," exclaimed Tom with great eagerness; "and I am sure I shall win a prize, whenever you try me, and I hope my mamma and sisters will be present."

"Certainly," replied Mr Seymour; "and I trust that Louisa and Fanny, who are of an age to understand the subject, will not prove uninterested spectators."

Mrs Seymour here remarked that Madame Dacier had acknowledged herself much indebted for her successful career in literature to her having attended the lessons given to her brother in early life.

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* "———— et male laxus
In pede calceus hæret."—*Sat.* i. 3. 31.

"Exactly so," said Mr Seymour; "she alluded to the lessons given by her father, M. Le Fevre; and I hope that John will, in like manner, profit by our scheme; and since I shall necessarily require, for illustration, certain toys which can scarcely afford any amusement to a boy of Tom's age and acquirements, it is but fair that they should be transferred into younger hands; our little philosopher, Matthew, will also, I am sure, enter into the spirit of our pastimes with equal satisfaction and advantage."

"Thank you! thank you! dear papa," was simultaneously shouted by several voices; and the happy children looked forward to the morrow with that mixed sensation of impatience and delight which always attends juvenile anticipations.

On the following morning, the vicar was seen approaching, when Tom and his sisters immediately ran forward to greet him.

"My dear boy," exclaimed the vicar, "I am truly rejoiced to see you!—when did you arrive from school?—How goes on Virgil?—Hey, my boy?—You must be delighted with the great Mantuan bard;—now confess, you little Trojan, can you eat a cheesecake without being reminded of the Harpy's prophecy, and its fulfilment, as discovered by young Ascanius?—

'Heus! etiam *mensas* consumimus? inquit Iulus.'[*]

But, bless me, how amazingly you have grown! and how healthy you look!" Tom took advantage of this pause in the vicar's address, which had hitherto flowed in so uninterrupted and rapid a stream as to preclude the possibility of any reply to his questions, to inform him that his father was on the lawn, and desirous of seeing him.

"Mr Twaddleton," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "you are just in time to witness the commencement of a series of amusements, which I have proposed for Tom's instruction during the holidays."

"Amusement and instruction," replied the vicar, "are not synonymous in my vocabulary."

"Oh, then, I perceive you are not of the school of Anaxagoras, who invented half-holidays, that the children *might have time to learn something*," observed Mr Seymour.

"Allow me to ask," said the vicar, "what the word 'Amusement' implies,[†] if it does not denote a temporary suspension of, or a turning away from, severer studies (*a Musis*); for remember we are told that, with the ancients, the Muses not only symbolized poetry, but also history, geometry, and other studies: in like manner the word *Diversion* expresses the *turning aside* from the labour in which we are daily engaged."

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[*] "See! we devour the plates on which we fed."
—*Æn.* vii. 116.

These edible platters may still be seen at a Persian feast, where they serve not only for plates but for napkins.—ED.

[†] See *Lectures on the Study of Words*, by Richard Chenevix Trench, B.D.; a work which merits our highest commendation.

"A very sound etymology, no doubt; but let me remind you," said Mr Seymour, "that the Muses even, so far from disdaining amusement, as you would imply, actually sought intervals of sportive leisure, to *amuse*, or perhaps I ought to say, to *un*muse themselves: so, at least, the poet tells us—

> 'Sunt etiam Musis sua ludicra mista Carmœnis
> Otia sunt—'

But let that pass for the present. As you have assailed me by a double-worded shot, it becomes my pleasure, in return, to prove how readily two words can put you out of court—'CRYSTAL PALACE!'—wherein the Muses and Graces, while they breathe forth their wisest and softest inspirations, unite in one jocund round of endless recreation; then never let it be said that instruction and amusement cannot be agreeably and profitably associated, when amidst blossoming flowers, and sparkling fountains, Philosophy can hold her court, and receive from Nature and Art the richest contributions for contemplation, and the choicest gifts for diversion. Is not this, my dear vicar, the very symbol of PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT?"

"The problem you would endeavour to solve appears to be this," said the vicar, "how to reconcile the cravings of youth for amusement, with the sterner demands of a grey-beard for instruction. I frankly admit that the '*Crystal Palace*' has been an attempt to bridge over the gulf."

"Not the '*Pons Asinorum*,' I hope," observed Mr Seymour.

"Why as to that," answered the vicar, "I willingly adopt the expression, provided you give it the true academic interpretation, as signifying a triumph over a first difficulty; but I have yet to learn how subjects so adverse in principle and so utterly discordant in action, as Sport and Science, can with safety be practically brought into juxtaposition—that is the question—but let me hear your fairy scheme, and have done with it."

"I have long thought," said Mr Seymour, "that all the first principles of natural philosophy might be easily taught, and beautifully illustrated, by the common toys and games which have been invented for the amusement of youth."

"A fig for such philosophy!" was the unceremonious and chilling reply of the vicar. "What have boys," continued he, "to do with philosophy? Let them learn their grammar, scan their hexameters, and construe Virgil; it is time enough to inflict upon them the torments of science after their names have been entered on the University boards."

"I differ from you entirely, my worthy friend; the principles of natural philosophy cannot be too early inculcated, nor can they be too widely diffused. It is surely a great object to engage the prepossessions on the side of truth, and to direct the natural curiosity of youth to useful objects."

"Hoity toity!" exclaimed the reverend gentleman; "such principles accord not with my creed; heresy, downright heresy; that a man of your excellent sense and intelligence can be so far deceived! But the world has run mad; and much do I grieve to find, that the seclusion of Overton Lodge has not secured its inmates from the infection. I came here, Mr Seymour, to receive your sympathy, and to profit by your counsel; but alas! alas! I have fallen into the camp of the enemy; '*Medios delapsus in hostes*,' as Virgil has it."

"You astonish me—what can have happened?" asked Mr Seymour.

"There is Tom Plank the carpenter," said the vicar, "soliciting subscriptions for the establishment of a philosophical society—a 'Mechanics' Institute,' I believe they call it. I understand that this mania—for by what other, or more charitable term can I express such conduct?—has seized this deluded man since his return from London, where he has been informed that all the 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' are about to associate themselves into societies for the promotion of science. Preposterous idea! as if a block of wood could not be split without a knowledge of the doctrine of percussion; a pail of water drawn from the well without an acquaintance with hydrostatics; nor a load securely carried without solving a problem to determine its centre of gravity; but as I am a Christian priest, I solemnly declare that I grieve only for my flock, and raise my feeble voice for no other purpose than that of scaring the wolf from the fold: to be angry, as Pope says, would be to revenge the faults of others upon ourselves; but I am not angry, Mr Seymour; I am only vexed, sorely vexed."

"Take it not thus to heart, my dear vicar," replied his consoling friend; "'*Solve metus*,' as your poet has it. Science, I admit, is both the Pallas and Pandora of mankind; its abuse may certainly prove mischievous, but its sober and well-timed application cannot fail to increase the happiness of every class of mankind, as well as to advance and improve every branch of the mechanical arts: so thoroughly am I satisfied upon this point, that I shall subscribe to the proposed society with infinite satisfaction."

"Mr Seymour! Mr Seymour! you little know the mischief you would do. Would you scatter the seeds of insubordination? manure the weeds of infidelity? fabricate a battering-ram to demolish our holy church? Such, indeed, must be the effect of your Utopian scheme; for truly may I exclaim with the immortal Maro—

. . . . 'in nostros fabricata est machina muros.'"*

"Come, come, my good friend, all this is declamation without argument," said Mr Seymour.

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* "An engine's raised to batter down our walls."—*Æn.* ii. 46.

"Without argument! Many are the sad instances which I could adduce in proof of the evil effects which have already accrued from this mistaken system. I am not in the habit, sir, of dealing in empty assertion; already has the aforesaid Tom Plank ventured to question the classical knowledge of his spiritual pastor, and, as I understand, has openly avowed himself, at the sixpenny club, as my rival in antiquarian pursuits."

"And why should he not?" said the mischievous Mr Seymour; "I warrant you he already possesses many an *old saw;* ay, and of a very great age, too, if we may judge from the *loss of its teeth.*"

During this remonstrance, Mr Twaddleton had been occupied in whirling round his steel watch-chain with convulsive rapidity, and, after a short pause, he burst out into the following exclamation—

"Worthy sir! if you persist in asserting, that a man whose occupation is to *plane deal* boards is prepared to dive into the sacred mysteries of antiquity, I shall next expect to hear that"—

"That your friend the carpenter knows a good *deal,*" cried Mr Seymour, interrupting the vicar; "that he is a grammarian, for he mends *stiles;* a wit, since he is a clever hand at *railing;* and as to his antiquarian pretensions, compare them with your own; *you* rescue *saws from the dust,* while *he* obtains *dust from his saws.*"

"What madness has seized my unfortunate friend?

'Infelix! quæ tanta animum dementia cepit?'*

as Virgil has it;—but let it pass, let it pass, Mr Seymour; my profession has taught me to bear with humility and patience the contempt and revilings of my brethren; I forgive Tom Plank for his presumption, as in that case I alone am the sufferer; but I say to you, that envy, trouble, discontent, strife, and poverty, will be the evil fruits of the seeds you would scatter. I verily believe, that unless this 'march of intellect,' as it has been termed, is speedily checked, Overton, in less than twelve months, will become a deserted village; for there is scarcely a tradesman who is not already distracted by some visionary scheme of scientific improvement, that leads them to the neglect of their occupations, and the dissipation of the honest earnings which their more prudent fathers had accumulated; '*Meliora pii docuere parentes,*' as the poet has it. What think you of Sam Corkington, who proposes to erect an apparatus in the crater of Mount Vesuvius, in order to supply every city on the continent with heat and light; or of Billy Spooner, who is about to establish a dairy at Spitzbergen, that he may furnish all Europe with ice-cream from the milk of whales; or of Tom Pipes,† who has actually prepared a prospectus for conveying music into our houses by resonant tubes issuing from a central orchestra, just as water and gas are laid on to our dwellings? Then, again, there is our village schoolmaster, Solomon Speed, not content with bridling the tempers, and fashioning the conduct of his scholars, must needs engage in a wild scheme to reform our climate, and to bring under subjection the ever-varying and fickle state of our atmosphere, so as to enable the farmer, at his own good pleasure, to command any kind of weather that may best suit his convenience. Impressed with the belief that all changes in the weather depend upon adverse electrical states, this usurper of the high prerogative of the '*cloud-compelling*' Jove, proposes to erect throughout the country electrifying towers, provided with batteries which may disperse or discharge streams of electricity through the atmosphere! '*O, viveret Democritus!*'"*

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* "What fury 's seized my friend?" *Æn.* v. 465.

† Since the last edition of this work, the above project has been actually realized, and successfully exhibited at the Polytechnic Institution, under the title of the *Telephonic Concert,* and which will be described in a future part of this work.

"I readily admit," said Mr Seymour, "that five-and-twenty years ago I might at once have denounced such schemes as the phantoms of a disordered brain; but in these days, when science has realized the fairy wonders of romance, and the productions of the mechanist and electrician have actually surpassed the wild imaginings of the poet; when we have engaged the lightning to carry our messages, and the sun to paint our portraits; when, by 'Arts chemical,' we can create fragrant perfumes, and the delicious flavours of the richest fruits of the earth, out of the very drainings of our stables and the refuse of our cow-houses, we surely ought to pause, my dear vicar, before we reject any proposition, however startling, as being absurd and impracticable."

The vicar, however, was not to be so appeased, and was preparing to proceed with an *Æneid of woes*, when the epic thread was suddenly snapped asunder by the explosion of a most audacious pun, which, although it turned the direction, did not diminish the violence of the vicar's indignation.

"Mr Seymour," exclaimed the incensed gentleman, "I perceive you are determined to meet my remonstrances with ridicule; when I had hoped to bring an argument incapable of refutation, '*Tum variæ illudunt pestes*,' as Virgil has it."

"Pray, allow me to ask," said Mr Seymour, "whether my puns or your quotations better merit that designation?"

"That you should compare the vile practice of punning with the elegant and refined habit of conveying our ideas by classic symbols, does indeed surprise and disturb me. Pope has said that words are the counters by which men represent their thoughts; the plebeian," continued the vicar, "selects base metal for their construction, while the scholar forms them of gold and gems, dug from the richest mines of antiquity. But to what vile purpose does the punster prostitute such counters! Not for the interchange of ideas, but, like the juggler, to deceive and astonish by acts of legerdemain."

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* Speed's theory has been since acted upon, and paragrêles adopted in France. —ED.

"How fortunate is it that you had not lived in the reign of King James!" remarked Mr Seymour; "for that singular monarch, as you may, perhaps, remember, made very few bishops who had not thus signalized themselves."

"To poison our ears by quibbles and quirks did well become him who sought to deceive our senses and blind our reason—the patron of puns and the believer in witchcraft were suitably united," replied the vicar.

"Well, as this is a subject upon which it is not likely we should agree, I will pass to another, where I hope to be more successful; I trust I shall induce you to view with more complacency my project of teaching philosophy by the aid of toys and sports."

"Mr Seymour, the proposal of instructing children in the principles of natural philosophy is really too visionary to require calm discussion; and can be equalled only in absurdity by the method you propose for carrying it into effect. Verily thou art a schoolmaster in sheep's clothing."

"Come, come, my dear vicar, pray chain up your prejudices, and let your kind spirit loose for half an hour: let me beg that you will so far indulge me as to listen patiently to the plan by which it is my intention to turn sport into science, or in other words, toys into instruments of philosophical instruction."

"And is it then possible," said the kind-hearted vicar, in a tone of supplication, "that you can seriously entertain such a wild, and I might add, kill-joy scheme? Would you pursue the luckless urchin from the schoolroom into the very playground, with your unrelenting tyranny? a sanctuary which the most rigid pedagogue has hitherto held inviolable. Is the buoyant spirit, so forcibly, though perhaps necessarily, repressed, during the hours of discipline, to have no interval for its free and uncontrolled expansion? Your science, methinks, Mr Seymour, might have taught you a wiser lesson; for you must well know that the most elastic body will lose that property by being constantly kept in a state of tension."

"A fine specimen of sophistry, upon my word, which would doubtless raise every nursery-governess and doting grandmother in open rebellion against me; but let me add, that it ill becomes a man of liberal and enlarged ideas, to suffer his opinions to be the sport of mere words; for, that our present difference is an affair of words, and of words only, I will undertake to prove, to the satisfaction of any unprejudiced person. *Play* and *work*—*amusement* and *instruction*—*toys* and *tasks*—are invariably, but most unjustifiably, employed as words of contrast and opposition; an error which has arisen from the indistinct and very indefinite ideas which we attach to such words. If the degree of mental exertion be said to constitute the difference between *play* and *work*, I am quite sure that the definition would be violated in the first illustration; for let me ask, when do boys exert so much thought as in carrying into effect their holiday schemes? The distinction might more properly be made to turn upon the irksome feelings which may be supposed to attend the drudgery of study, when its promised objects have no direct sympathies in the imagination of the student; but this can never happen except from a vicious system of education that excludes the operations of thought; a school that locks in the body, while it locks out the mind: depend upon it, Mr Twaddleton, that the human mind, whether in youth or manhood, is ever gratified by the acquisition of information; every occupation soon cloys, unless it be seasoned by this stimulant. Is not the child idle and miserable in a nursery full of playthings? and to what expedient does he instinctively fly to relieve his *ennui?* Why, he breaks his toys to pieces, as Miss Edgeworth justly observes, not from the love of mischief, but from the hatred of idleness, or rather from an innate thirst after knowledge; and he becomes, as it were, an enterprising adventurer, and opens for himself a new source of pleasure and amusement, in exploring the mechanism of their several parts.* (3.) Think you, then, Mr Twaddleton, that any assistance or encouragement which might be offered the boy under such circumstances, would be received by him as a task? Certainly not. The acquisition of knowledge, then, instead of detracting from, must heighten the amusement of toys; and if I have succeeded in convincing you of this truth, my object is accomplished. How greatly," continued he, "do parents and preceptors err in mistaking for mischief, or wanton idleness, all the little manœuvres of young persons, which are frequently practical inquiries to confirm or refute doubts which are passing in their minds! When the aunt of James Watt reproved the boy for his idleness, and desired him to take a book, or employ himself usefully, and not be taking off the lid of the kettle, and putting it on again, and holding now a cup, and now a silver spoon over the steam, how little was she aware he was initiating inquiries which were destined to lead to the greatest of human inventions!"

Thus did Mr Seymour, like an able general, assail his adversary on his own ground; he drove him, as it were, into a corner, and, by seizing the only pass through which he could make his escape, forced him to surrender at discretion.

"Why, truly," replied the vicar, after a short pause, "I am ready to admit that there is much good sense in your observations; and if the scientific instruction upon these occasions be not carried so far as to puzzle the boy, I am inclined to withdraw my opposition."

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* So exactly does Göthe express the same idea, that it has been thought satisfactory to record the passage in a subplementary note (3).

"Therein lies the whole secret; I do not offer you the black and bitter root of the '*Moly*,' but its white, sweet, and agreeable flower.* When an occupation agreeably interests the understanding, imagination, or passions of children, it is what is commonly understood by the term *play* or *sport*; whereas that which is not accompanied with such associations, and yet may be necessary for their future welfare, is, properly enough, designated as a *task*."

"I like your distinction," observed the vicar.

"Then may I hope that you will indulge me so far as to listen to the scheme by which it is my intention to turn 'Sport into Science,' or, in other words, *Toys* into instruments of *Philosophical Instruction?*"

The vicar smiled and nodded assent.

Mr Seymour proceeded—"In the first place, I would give the boy some general notions with regard to the properties of matter, such as its gravitation, vis inertiæ, elasticity, &c. What apparatus can be required for such a purpose, beyond some of the more simple toys? Indeed, I will undertake to demonstrate the three grand laws of motion by a game at ball; while the composition and resolution of forces may be beautifully exemplified during a game of marbles, especially that of 'ring-taw;' but in order that you may more clearly comprehend the capability of my plan, allow me to enumerate the various philosophical principles which are involved in the operation of the several more popular toys and sports. We will commence with the ball; which will illustrate the nature and phenomena of *elasticity*, as it leaps from the ground;—of *rotatory motion*, while it runs along its surface;—of *reflected motion*, and of the *angles of incidence and reflection*, as it rebounds from the wall;—and of *projectiles*, as it is whirled through the air; at the same time the cricket-bat may serve to explain the *centre of percussion*. A game at marbles may be made subservient to the same purposes, and will farther assist us in conveying clear ideas upon the subject of the *collision of elastic and non-elastic bodies*, and of their *velocities and direction after im-*

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* Thus, while he spoke, the sovereign plant he drew
Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew
And shed its nature and its wond'rous power;
Black was the root, but milky white the flower,
Moly the name, by mortals hard to find,
But all is easy to th' ethereal mind;
This Hermes gave—— *Odyss.* x.

Hermes here allegorically represents Instruction, and *Moly* the plant of Knowledge—whose *black* and bitter root symbolises the irksome commencement of study, or, in the words of Plato, "the beginning of instruction, which is always accompanied with reluctance and pain."

It is scarcely necessary to apprise the young botanist that this said *Moly* is to be found only in poetical soil.

pact. The composition and resolution of forces may be explained at the same time. The game of Ricochet, or '*Duck and Drake*,' as it is called, will afford an occasion for considering the elasticity of water, and the parallelogram of forces, by which the projected stone, or shell, is actuated. The nature of *elastic springs* will require no other apparatus for its elucidation than Jack-in-the-box and the numerous leaping-frogs and cats with which the play-room abounds. The leathern sucker will exemplify the nature of *cohesion*, and the effect of water in filling up those inequalities by which contiguous surfaces are deprived of their attractive power; it will, at the same time, demonstrate the nature of a *vacuum*, and the influence of *atmospheric pressure*. The squirt will afford a farther illustration of the same views, and will furnish a practical proof of the weight of the atmosphere in raising a column of water. The theory of the pump will necessarily follow. The greater elasticity of air compared with that of water, I shall be able to show by the amusing exhibition of the '*Bottle Imps*.'"

"Bottle Imps!—'*Acheronta movebis*;'" muttered the vicar.

Mr Seymour continued—"The various balancing toys will elucidate the nature of the *centre of gravity*, *point of suspension*, and *line of direction*; the see-saw, rocking-horse, and the operation of walking on stilts, will here come in aid of our explanations. The combined effects of momentum and a change in the centre of gravity of a body may be beautifully exemplified by the action of the Chinese Tumblers. The Bandalore will exemplify the nature of the *momentum of rotatory motion*. The Sling will demonstrate the existence and effect of *centrifugal force*; and humble and finite as the alliance may seem, it will satisfactorily explain the motions of those celestial orbs that revolve to all eternity around a central sun. The Top* and tetotum will prove the power of whirling motion to support the axis of a body in an unaltered position. The trundling of the hoop will accomplish the same and other objects; as will also the whirling of the *quoit*, with the additional advantage of not having its motions impeded by contact with the ground. The game of *bilboquet*, or cup and ball, will show the influence of rotatory motion in steadying the rectilinear path of a spherical body, whence the theory of the rifle-gun may be deduced. For conveying some elementary ideas of the doctrine of *oscillation*, there is the swing. The flight of the arrow will not only elucidate the principles of *projectiles*, but will explain the force of the air in producing rotatory motion by its impact on oblique surfaces: the revolution of the shuttlecock may be shown to depend upon the same resolution of forces. Then comes the Kite, one of the most instructive and amusing of all the pastimes of youth,—the favourite toy of Newton in his boyish days:[*] its ascent at once develops the theory of the composition and resolution of forces, and explains various subordinate principles, which I shall endeavour to describe when we arrive at the subject. The *see-saw* will unfold the general principle upon which the Mechanical Powers are founded; and the boy may thus be easily led to the theory of the *lever*, and to that of the *steel-yard*, by being shown how readily he can balance the heavier weight of a man by riding on the longer arm of the plank. The theory of colours may be pointed out to him as he blows his soap-bubbles;[†] an amusement which will, at the same time, convince him that the air must exert a pressure equally in all directions. For explaining the theory of sound there are the whistle, the humming-top, the whizgig, the pop-gun, the bull-roarer, and sundry other amusements well-known in the playground: but it is not my intention at present to enumerate *all* the toys and games which may be rendered subservient to philosophical instruction; I merely wish to convince you that my plan is not quite so chimerical as you were at first inclined to believe. I do not profess to place the head of Laertes on the shoulders of Telemachus, nor, like Friar Bacon, to teach the science of the age in half-a-year; but I do engage to teach the young student those rudiments by which, with diligence and a willing mind, he may ultimately acquire it; and, above all, to imbue his mind with an early taste for pursuits, which, in this practical age, are daily rising in importance."[‡]

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* "The motion of the top is a matter of the greatest importance. It is applicable to the elucidation of some of the greatest phenomena in nature."—*Airy's Lecture at Ipswich.*

"Upon my word," said the vicar, "no squirrel ever hopped from branch to branch with more agility,—you are the very counterpart of

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[*] Sir Isaac Newton is said to have been much attached to philosophical sports when a boy; he was the first to introduce paper kites at Grantham, where he was at school. He took pains to find out their proper proportions and figure, and the proper place for fixing the string to them. He made lanterns of paper crimpled, which he used to go to school by in winter mornings with a candle, and he tied them to the tail of his kites in a dark night, which at first frightened the country people exceedingly, who took his candles for comets; while to Hudibras they have served as a light to fire a telescopic squib. Sir David Brewster states, on the authority of Dr Stukeley, that "he invented diversions above the vulgar kind, in order to please his school-fellows, and allure them from trifling amusements, and teach them to play philosophically." Our immured citizen will smile when he is told that Ben Jonson as a boy was seen flying his kite by the windmill in Saint Giles's Fields.

[†] The colours which glitter on a soap-bubble are the immediate consequence of a principle the most important from the variety of phenomena it explains, and the most beautiful from its simplicity and compendious neatness, in the whole science of Optics.—*Herschel's Preliminary Discourse.* In a future part of this work it will be seen that the soap-bubble enabled Faraday to carry out a most important series of magnetical experiments.

[‡] Let it be remembered that the State now requires a knowledge of physics from those young men who enter into its service.

Cornelius Scriblerus; but I must confess that your scheme is plausible, very plausible, and I shall no longer refuse to attend you in the progress of its execution.

> 'Cedo equidem, nec, nate, tibi comes ire recuso,'*

as Virgil has it."

Mr Seymour, however, saw very plainly, that although the vicar thus withdrew his opposition, he was nevertheless very far from embarking in the cause with enthusiasm, and that, upon the principle already discussed, he would perform his part rather as a *task* than a *pastime*. Nor was the line which Mr Twaddleton had quoted from the Æneid calculated to efface such an impression. It was true that, like Anchises, he no longer refused to accompany him in his expedition; but, if the comparison were to run parallel, it was evident that, like Æneas, he would have to carry him as a dead weight on his shoulders. This difficulty, however, was speedily surmounted by an expedient, with which the reader will become acquainted by the recital of what followed.

"I rejoice greatly," said Mr Seymour, "that we have at length succeeded in enlisting you into our service; without your able assistance I fear that my instruction would be extremely imperfect; for you must know, my dear sir, that I am ambitious of making Tom an antiquary as well as a philosopher, and I look to you for a history of the several toys which I shall have occasion to introduce, as well as for the allusions made to them in the classics."

This propitiatory sentence had its desired effect.

"Most cheerfully shall I comply with your wishes," exclaimed the delighted vicar; "and I can assure you, sir, that with regard to several of the more popular toys and pastimes, there is much very curious and interesting lore."

Mr Seymour had upon this occasion succeeded in opening the heart of the vicar, just as a skilful mechanic would pick a patent lock; who, instead of forcing it by direct violence, seeks to discover the secret spring to which all its various movements are subservient.

"To-morrow, then," cried the vicar, in a voice of great exultation, "we will commence our career, and inaugurate the '*Juvenalia;*' from which I anticipate the highest satisfaction and advantage; in the meantime," continued he, "I will refresh my memory upon certain points touching the antiquities of these said pastimes, or, as we used to say at college, *get up* the subject. I will also press into our service my friend and neighbour Jeremy Prybabel, whose etymological knowledge will greatly assist us in tracing the origin of many of the words used in our sports, which is frequently not very obvious."

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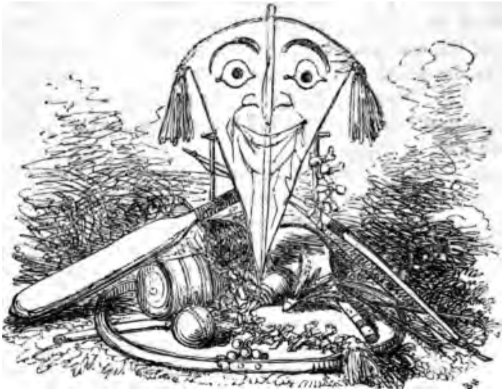
* "I yield, my son, and no longer refuse to become your companion."—*Æn.* ii. 704.

Mr Seymour cast an intelligible glance at his wife, who was no less surprised at the sudden change in the vicar's sentiments than she was pleased with the skill and address by which it had been accomplished.



CHAPTER II.

AT about two o'clock, Mr Twaddleton joined the children and their parents on the lawn.

"Why, vicar, what on earth is the matter?" asked Mr Seymour, who perceived, at a glance, that something had disturbed the usual equanimity of the worthy clergyman.

"The matter! why the matter is, that your 'Botanical Horologe' is sadly out of its reckoning, and that Flora must have cruelly jilted old Time, for, on just now passing it on my way hither, I found the *Yellow Goatsbeard* had closed long before the hour indicated by its allied figure of Box."

"Well, there is at all events an acknowledged precedent for such irregularity. The old watchman of bygone days, when he should have been telling the hour, was not unfrequently found asleep in his *Box*."

"That Saxon monosyllable, Box,* from its numerous equivocal meanings, has, I verily believe, given rise to more villanous puns and quibbles than any other word to be found in the English language."

"If so," replied Mr Seymour, "it must have proved an interminable *Box upon the ear*."

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* With what humour have the 'Twenty significations of the word Box' been illustrated by Mr Mathews ('*At Home*'), in the confusion and dismay of M. Ventriloque!—See *Mathews' Life*, vol. iv. p. 172.

"There again! there again!" shouted the vicar; "oh! Mr Seymour, if the *Box* of Pandora ever gave flight to a troop of malevolent spirits, so surely has the *Box* of the punster let loose a no less pestilent storm, for the annoyance and distraction of every grammatical ear."

How little was the good vicar aware of the oracular import of a sentiment so soon destined to be verified in the figurative construction of the Kite's Tail!—but of that hereafter.

"Well, well, be pacified, and let it kindly pass," said Mr Seymour, in a tone of conciliation. "If the points of my jests have acted as spurs to your classical reminiscences, and elicited illustrations so gratifying to yourself, and so amusing to your friends, you, surely, can have but little cause for complaint; and if my puns have occasionally trenched somewhat rudely upon your prejudices, they have at the same time called into play your more cherished sympathies, and left you well pleased with yourself. Is it not so? are you ever so happy as when you rebuff a verbal quibble by a classical repartee? So that these shafts of mine, as it is your good pleasure to call them, carry with them a balm for any scratch they may occasion."

"Oh, I guess your allusion—you would no doubt compare your weapon to the spear of Achilles that wounded Telephus, and then, by its own inherent virtue, healed the very wound it had inflicted," observed the vicar.

"Had I required any further support to my argument, you have now undoubtedly afforded it," said Mr Seymour.

"You mistake me, and deceive yourself," retorted the vicar. "It was not, sir, either for pleasure or for triumph, but for shelter from your merciless inflictions, that I took sanctuary in classic ground."

"I have ever maintained, what I now repeat," said Mr Seymour, "that however disdainfully you repel a succession of puns, they have ever been the promoters of your liveliness, and the source of a pleasing activity. I can only compare you to the overshot water-wheel, which casts off the stream in useless foam, but not until it has acquired an impetus for its motion and activity. Let us, then, without further ado, proceed."

"Now, Tom, are you ready to commence the proposed trial?" asked his father.

"Quite ready, and impatient to begin," was the boy's answer.

"Then you must first inform me," said Mr Seymour, taking the ball out of Rosa's hand, "why this ball falls to the ground as soon as I withdraw from it the support of my hand?"

"Because every *heavy* body that is not supported must of course fall."

"And every *light* one also, my dear; but that is no answer to my question; you merely assert the fact, without explaining the reason."

"Oh! now I understand you; it is owing to the force of gravity;

the earth attracts the ball, and the consequence is, that they both come together;—is not that right?"

"Certainly; but if the earth attract the ball, it is equally true that the ball must attract the earth; for you have, doubtless, learnt that bodies mutually attract each other: tell me, therefore, why the earth should not rise to meet the ball?"

"Because the earth is so much larger and heavier than the ball."

"It is, doubtless, much larger; and since the force of attraction is in proportion to the mass, or quantity of matter, you cannot be surprised at not perceiving the earth rise to meet the ball, the attraction of the latter being so infinitely small, in comparison with that of the former, as to render its effect wholly nugatory; but with regard to the earth being heavier than the ball, what will you say when I tell you that, in the ordinary meaning of the term, it cannot correctly be said to have any weight?"

"No weight at all!"

Tom begged that his father would explain to him how it could possibly be that the earth should not possess any weight.

"Remember that I qualified the assertion by saying, that '*according to the meaning generally attached to the word weight;*' which you will readily perceive can only apply to bodies on the surface of the earth, and is totally inapplicable to the globe itself; for, after all, weight is nothing more than the measure of a resistance opposed to the attraction of a body for the earth; and how can the earth attract itself? You have just now very correctly stated that all bodies have a tendency to fall, in consequence of the attraction of gravitation; but if they be supported, and so prevented from falling, whether by the hand, or a dish, called a *scale*, or by any other means, this tendency will be felt or perceived, and the amount or measure of such resistance is said to be the weight of the body in question. I am, at the same time, bound to admit, that if you regard the earth as a mass in space, obedient, however, to the law that governs all bodies on its surface, you would then have a right to talk of its weight."

"And has not this been actually accomplished?" asked the vicar.

"Undoubtedly, thanks to Sir Isaac Newton;* and wonderful as it may seem, the astronomer has not only ascertained the weight of the earth, but of that of the planets also, ay, and with as much certainty as the farmer weighs a truss of hay: when our pupils are a little farther advanced, I shall be happy to tell them the means by which this has been effected (4), but at present it would be imprudent to confuse them by a too rapid influx of ideas, at once so new and startling."

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* On the monument erected to Sir Isaac Newton, in Westminster Abbey, are sculptured, in *bass-relief*, youths, bearing in their hands the emblems of his principal discoveries, one of whom is weighing the sun and planets with a steelyard.

Tom understood this explanation of weight, and observed, that "since attraction was always in proportion to the quantity of matter, so, of course, a larger body must be more powerfully attracted, or be *heavier*, than a smaller one."

"Magnitude, or size, my dear, has nothing whatever to do with quantity of matter: will not a small piece of lead weigh more than a large piece of sponge? In the one case, the particles of matter may be supposed to be packed in a smaller compass; in the other, there must exist a greater number of pores or interstices."

Mr Seymour proceeded to put another question: "Since," continued he, "you now understand the nature of that force by which bodies fall to the earth, can you tell me the velocity with which they fall?"

Tom asserted that the weight of the body, or its quantity of matter, and its distance from the surface of the earth, must, in every case, determine that; but Mr Seymour excited his surprise by saying, that it would not be influenced by either of those conditions; he informed them, for instance, that a cannon-ball, and a marble, would fall through the same number of feet in a given time, and that, whether the experiment were tried from the top of a house, or from the summit of St Paul's, the same result would be obtained.

"I am quite sure," exclaimed Tom, "that in the *Conversations on Natural Philosophy*, it is positively stated, that *attraction is always in proportion to the quantity of matter*."

"Yes," observed Louisa, "and it is moreover asserted, that the *attraction diminishes as the distances increase*."

Mr Seymour said, that he perceived the very common error under which his children laboured, and that he would endeavour to remove it. "You cannot," continued he, "divest your minds of that erroneous but natural feeling, that a body necessarily falls to the ground without the exertion of any force: whereas, the greater the quantity of matter, the greater must be the force exerted to bring it to the earth: for instance, a substance which weighs a hundred pounds will thus require just ten times more force than one which only weighs ten pounds; and hence it must follow, that both will come to the ground at the same moment; for although, in the one case, there is ten times more matter, there is, at the same time, ten times more attraction to overcome its resistance; for you have already admitted that the force of attraction is always in proportion to the quantity of matter. Now let us only for an instant, for the sake merely of argument, suppose that attraction had been a force acting without any regard to quantity of matter, is it not evident that, in such a case, the body containing the largest quantity would be the slowest in falling to the earth?"

"I understand you, papa," cried Tom: "if an empty waggon travelled four miles an hour, and were afterwards so loaded as to have its weight doubled, it could only travel at the rate of two miles in the same period, provided that in both cases the horses exerted the same strength."

"Exactly," said Mr Seymour; "and to follow up your illustration, which is not a bad one, it is only necessary to state, that Nature, like a considerate master, always apportions the number of horses to the burthen that is to be moved, so that her loads, whatever may be their weight, always travel at the same rate; or, to express the fact in philosophical instead of figurative language, gravitation, or the force of the earth's attraction, always increases as the quantity of matter, and, consequently, that heavy and light bodies, when dropped together from the same altitude, must come to the ground at the same instant of time."

Louisa had listened with great attention to this explanation; and although she thoroughly understood the argument, yet it appeared to her at variance with so many facts with which she was acquainted, that she could not give implicit credence to it.

"I think, papa," said the archly-smiling girl, "I could overturn this fine argument by a very simple experiment."

"Indeed, Miss Sceptic: then pray proceed; and I think we shall find that the more strenuously you oppose it, the more powerful it will become: but let us hear your objections."

"I shall only," replied she, "drop a shilling and a piece of paper from my bedroom window upon the lawn, and request that you will observe which of them reaches the ground first; if I am not much mistaken, you will find that the coin will strike the earth before the paper has performed half its journey."

Tom appeared perplexed, and cast an inquiring look at his father.

"Come," said Mr Seymour, "I will perform this experiment myself, and endeavour to satisfy the doubts of our young sceptic; but I must first take the opportunity to observe that I am never better pleased than when you attempt to raise difficulties in my way, and I hope you will always express them without reserve."

"Here, then, is a penny-piece; and here," said Tom, "is a piece of paper."

"Which," continued Mr Seymour, "we will cut into a corresponding shape and size." This having been accomplished, he held the coin in one hand and the paper disc in the other, and dropped them at the same instant.

"There! there!" cried Louisa, with an air of triumph; "the coin reached the ground long before the paper."

Mr Seymour allowed that there was a distinct interval in favour of the penny-piece; and he proceeded to explain the cause of it. He stated that the result was not contrary to the law of gravitation, since it arose from the interference of a foreign body, the air, to the resistance of which it was to be attributed: and he desired them to consider the particles of a falling body as being under the influence of two opposing forces,—gravity and the air's resistance. Louisa argued, that the air could only act on the surface of a body, and as this was equal in both cases (the size of the paper being exactly the same as that of the penny-piece), she could not see why the resistance of the air should not also be equal in both cases.

"I admit," said Mr Seymour, "that the air can only act upon the surface of a falling body, and this is the very reason of the paper meeting with more resistance than the coin; for the latter, from its greater density, must contain many more particles than the paper, and upon which the air cannot possibly exert any action; whereas almost every particle of the paper may be said to be exposed to its resistance, the fall of the latter must therefore be more retarded than that of the former body."

At this explanation Louisa's doubts began to clear off, and they were ultimately dispelled on Mr Seymour performing a modification of the above experiment in the following manner. He placed the disc of paper in close contact with the upper part of the coin, and, in this position, dropped them from his hand. They both reached the ground at the same instant.

"Are you now satisfied, my dear Louisa?" asked her father: "you perceive that, by placing the paper in contact with the coin, I screened it from the action of the air, and the result is surely conclusive."

"Many thanks to you, dear papa; I am perfectly satisfied, and shall feel less confident for the future." Tom was delighted; for, as he said, he could now understand why John's paper *parachute* descended so deliberately to the ground; he could also explain why feathers, and other light bodies, floated in the air; and how it happened that a piece of paper, when crumpled up, fell so much more quickly, than when unfolded and flat, a question that was put to him the other day, but which he was then unable to answer. "Well then," said Mr Seymour, "having settled this knotty point, let us proceed to the other question, viz., 'that a body will fall with the same velocity, during a given number of feet, from the ball of St Paul's as from the top of a house.' You maintain, I believe, that, since the attraction of the earth for a body diminishes as its distance from it increases,* a substance at a great height ought to fall more slowly than one which is dropped from a less altitude."

Neither Tom nor Louisa could think otherwise. Mr Seymour told them that, *in theory*, they were perfectly correct, but that since attraction acted from the centre, and not from the surface of the earth, the difference of its force could not be discovered at the small elevations to which they could have access: "for what," said he, "can a few hundred feet be in comparison with four thousand miles, which is the distance from the centre to the surface of our globe?—You must therefore perceive that, in all ordinary calculations respecting the velocity of falling bodies, we may safely exclude such a consideration."

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* Gravity, or the tendency of a body to approach the earth, is inversely as the *square of the distance;* that is, if a body be attracted by the earth at a certain distance, with a certain force, and be afterwards removed to *twice* the distance, it will now be attracted not *half* as much, but only *one-fourth* as much as it was before; and if it be removed to *three* times the first distance, it will be attracted, not *one-third* as much, but *one-ninth* as much as before; four being the square of two, and nine the square of three; and so on.

"But suppose," said Tom, "it were possible to make the experiment a thousand miles above the earth, would not the diminished effect of gravity be discovered in that case?"

"Undoubtedly; indeed it would be sensible at a much less distance: for instance, if a lump of lead, weighing a thousand pounds, were carried up only four miles, it would be found to have lost two pounds of its weight." (5.)

"This discussion," observed Mr Twaddleton, "reminds me of a problem that was once proposed at Cambridge, to find the elevation to which the Tower of Babel could have been raised, before the stones would have entirely lost their gravity."

"Its solution," said Mr Seymour, "would require a consideration which Tom could not possibly understand at present, viz., the influence of the *centrifugal force*."

"I am fully aware of it," replied the vicar, "and in order to appreciate that influence, it would, of course, be necessary to take into account the latitude of the place; but, if my memory serves me, I think that under the latitude of 30°, which I believe is nearly that of the plains of Mesopotamia, the height would be somewhere about twenty-four thousand miles."

Mr Seymour now desired Tom to inform him, since all bodies fall with the *same* velocity, what that velocity might be.

"Sixteen feet in a second, papa;—I have just remembered that I had a dispute with a schoolfellow upon that subject, and in which, thanks to Mrs Marcet, I came off victorious, and won twelve marbles."

"Then let me tell you, my fine fellow, that unless your answer exclusively related to the *first* second of time, you did not win the marbles fairly; for, since the force of gravity is continually acting, so is the velocity of a falling body continually increasing, or it has what is termed an '*accelerating velocity;*' it has accordingly been ascertained by accurate experiments, that a body descending from a considerable height falls sixteen feet, as you say, in the *first* second of time; but *three times sixteen* in the next; *five times sixteen* in the third; and *seven times sixteen* in the fourth; and so on, continually increasing according to the odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11,

&c.; so that you perceive," continued Mr Seymour, "by observing the number of seconds which a stone requires to descend from any height, we can discover the altitude, or depth, of the place in question."

Louisa and Fanny, who had been attentively listening to their father's explanation, interchanged a smile of satisfaction, and, pulling Tom towards them, whispered something which was inaudible to the rest of the party.

"Come, now," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "I perceive by your looks that you have something to ask of me: is Louisa sceptical again?"

"Oh dear no," replied Tom; "Louisa merely observed that we might now be able to find out the depth of the village well, about which we have all been very curious; for the gardener has told us that it is the deepest in the kingdom, and was dug more than a hundred years ago."

Mr Seymour did not believe that it was the deepest in the kingdom, although he knew that its depth was considerable; and he said that if Mr Twaddleton had no objection, they should walk to it, and make the proposed experiment.

"Objection! my dear Mr Seymour, when do I ever object to afford pleasure to my little playmates, provided its indulgence be harmless? much less when it is associated with instruction. The old adage tells us that 'Truth lies at the bottom of a well,' so let us proceed at once to invade her retreat, and extort her secrets; and on our return I hope you will favour me with a visit at the vicarage: I have some antiquities which I am anxious to exhibit to yourself and Mrs Seymour." Tom and Rosa each took the vicar's hand, and Mr and Mrs Seymour followed with Louisa and Fanny. The village well was about half a mile distant; the road to it led through a delightful shady lane, at the top of which stood the vicarage-house. Mr and Mrs Seymour and her daughters had lingered in their way to collect botanical specimens; and when they had come up to Tom and the vicar, they found them seated on the trunk of a newly-felled oak, in deep discourse.

"What interests you, Tom?" said Mr Seymour, who perceived, by the inquiring and animated countenance of the boy, that his attention had been excited by some occurrence.

"I have been watching the woodman, and have been surprised that the sound of his hatchet was not heard until some time after he had struck the tree."

"And has not Mr Twaddleton explained to you the reason of it?"

"He has," replied Tom, "and he tells me that it is owing to sound travelling so much more slowly than light."

"You are quite right; and as we are upon an expedition for the purpose of measuring depths, it may not be amiss to inform you that this fact furnishes another method of calculating distances."

The party seated themselves upon the oak, and Mr Seymour proceeded :—"The stroke of the axe is seen at the moment the woodman makes it, on account of the immense velocity with which light travels (6); but the noise of the blow will not reach the ear until some time has elapsed, the period varying, of course, in proportion to the distance, because sound moves only at the rate of 1142 feet in a second, or about thirteen miles in a minute: so that you perceive, by observing the time that elapses between the fall of the hatchet and the sound produced by it, we can ascertain the distance of the object, by multiplying the given time in seconds by 1142 for the corresponding distance in feet."

Mr Seymour fixed his eye attentively on the woodman, and, after a short pause, declared that he was about half a mile distant.

"Why, how could you discover that?" cried Louisa; "you had not any watch in your hand."

"But you might have perceived that I placed my finger on my wrist, and as my pulse beats about 70 strokes in a minute,* I was able to form a tolerable estimate of the interval, although I confess that it is a very rough experiment, but sufficiently accurate for the purpose of illustration. In the same manner we can readily ascertain the distance of a thunder-cloud, or that of a vessel at sea firing a cannon. If we do not hear the thunder till half a minute after we see the lightning, we are to conclude the cloud to be at the distance of six miles and a half. But let us proceed to the well."

After a walk of a few minutes, the party reached the place of destination. On their arrival Mr Seymour inquired who would count the time.

"Be that office mine," said Mr Twaddleton, as he extracted a large silver timepiece from the dark abyss of his watch-pocket; "and let Tom," continued he, "find a pebble."

"Here is one," cried Louisa.

"Very well: now, then, how will you proceed?" asked Mr Seymour.

"I shall drop the stone," replied Tom, "into the well, and observe how many seconds it will be before it touches the water, and I shall then set down the number of feet it will fall in each second, and add up the numbers."

"That," said Mr Seymour, "would certainly accomplish your object; but I can give you a neater, as well as a shorter rule for performing the sum: you shall, however, first work it in your own way;—but you have not yet informed me how you propose to ascertain the moment at which the stone reaches the water."

"By the sound, to be sure, and you will find that a very loud one will be produced."

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* The pulse was the measure of time used by Galileo in his celebrated experiments. At a pulse of 70, we may reckon about a mile for every 5¼ pulsations.

"If the depth of the well be considerable, such a plan will not answer the purpose, since, in that case, there must necessarily be a perceptible interval between the fall of the stone and the sound produced by it, as you have just seen exemplified by the woodman, which, unless taken into account, will vitiate the result."

Tom observed that he had not thought of that difficulty, and did not know how he could get over it. His father told him, that he must look at the surface of the water, and mark the moment it was disturbed by the stone.

"Now, Mr Twaddleton," said Mr Seymour, "are you ready to count the seconds?"

"Quite ready."

"Then drop the stone."

"One,—two,—three,—four—"

"There," said Tom, "it touched the water."

"And there, there," cried several voices, "what a noise it made!"

"*Facilis descensus Averni!*" exclaimed the vicar; "the stone descended in four seconds."

"Now, my boy, make your calculation."

Mr Seymour furnished pencil and paper, and Tom proceeded;—"*Sixteen* feet for the first second,—I put that down."

"Well," said his father, "and *three* times *sixteen* for the second?"

"*Forty-eight*," cried Tom.—

"Put it down."

"*Five times sixteen* for the third?"

"*Eighty*."—

"Down with it."

"And *seven times sixteen* for the fourth?"

"*One hundred and twelve*."

"Now, cast up these numbers," said Mr Seymour.

"*Two hundred and fifty-six feet*," cried Tom, "is the depth of the well."

A shout of delight, from the whole juvenile party, announced the satisfaction which they felt at the success of their first experiment in NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

Louisa observed, that she could not distinguish any interval between the actual contact of the stone with the water and the sound which it produced.

"At so small a distance as two hundred and fifty-six feet," said her father, "the interval could not have exceeded in duration the fourth part of a second, and was, consequently, imperceptible: we might therefore, in the present instance, have accepted the sound as a signal of the stone's arrival at the water, without prejudice to the result of the experiment."

Mr Seymour told his son, that the method which he had pursued was unobjectionable when the experiment did not extend beyond a few seconds: but that, if a case occurred in which a greater space of time were consumed, he would find his plan tedious: "Now I will give you a general rule that will enable you to obtain the answer in a shorter time without the details of addition. '*The spaces described by a falling body increase as the squares of the times increase.*' I conclude that you already know that the *square* of a number is the sum obtained by multiplying the number into itself."

"Certainly," answered Tom; "the square of 4 is 16; that of 3, 9, and so on."

"This, then, being the case, you have only to square the number of seconds, and then multiply that product by 16, being the space described by the falling body in the first second, and you will have the required answer: apply this rule to the present case; the stone fell to the bottom in four seconds; square this number, 4 × 4 = 16; multiply this by 16, and we obtain 256."

"That," said Tom, "is certainly much more simple than my method."

"And it has the advantage," observed the vicar, "of being more portable for the memory."

"Should any of the villagers observe us," said Mrs Seymour, "they will take us for a party of fortune-tellers."

"Of fortune-tellers!" repeated Louisa, with surprise.

"Yes, my dear, there is a foolish superstition attached to this, and I believe to many other wells in the neighbourhood of remote villages, that by dropping pebbles into it, and observing whether they produce a loud, or only a slight sound, and by noticing the number of times they rebound from the sides before they reach the bottom, and other absurd distinctions, a person can predict whether good or evil awaits them." (7.)

Mrs Seymour now proposed the party's return to the Lodge; but Mr Twaddleton expressed a hope that they would first favour him with a visit at the vicarage; to which proposition they readily assented.

His antiquated residence, mantled in ivy, and shaded by cypress, stood on the confines of the churchyard, from which his grounds were merely separated by a dwarf hedge of sweet-brier and roses; so that the vicar might be said to reside amidst the graves of his village parishioners, and the turf-clad heap evinced the influence of his fostering care by a grateful return of primroses and violets.

Around the house the reverend antiquary had arranged several precious relics, which were too cumbrous for admission within its walls; amongst these was an ancient cross, raised upon a platform on four steps, which from the worn appearance of the stones had evidently been impressed with the foot of many a wandering pilgrim. These mouldering monuments of ancient days cast a shade of solemnity around the dwelling, and announced its inmate as a person of no ordinary stamp.

Annette, the vicar's trusty servant, had watched the approach of the squire and his family, and, anticipating the honours of a passing visit, was busily engaged in removing the chequed covers from the cumbrous oaken chairs, and the various other bibs and tuckers with which his curiosities were invested, when the party entered the study. Lucky was it for the vicar's repose, that the notice had been so short, or the tidy housewife would, without doubt, have scoured some of the antique commodities, and destroyed a crop of sacred verdure, which ages could not have replenished. As matters stood, nothing was left for poor Annette, but to defend her character at the expense of her master, who she declared treated her as though she was an old witch, whenever she was seen with a *broom.*

"Why, papa," exclaimed Tom, as he cast his eyes around the study, "all these curiosities have been put up since I went to school."

"The boy is right," said the vicar; "I have only just completed their arrangement, and I believe," continued he, addressing himself to Mr Seymour, "that there are several rich morsels of antiquity which you have not yet seen: but I must, in the first place, introduce my young friends to the wonders of my magic gallery; wherein they may converse with the spirits of departed emperors, heroes, patriots, sages, and beauties;—contemplate, at their leisure, the countenances of the Alexanders, Cæsars, Pompeys, and Trajans;—behold a legion of allegorical and airy beings, who have here, for the first time, assumed appropriate and substantial forms;—examine the models of ancient temples and triumphal arches, which, although coeval with the edifices they represent, are as perfect as at the first moment of their construction, while the originals have long since crumbled into dust. They shall also see volumes of history, condensed into a space of a few inches, and read the substance of a hundred pages at a single glance."

"How extraordinary!" said Tom: "why, we never read anything more wonderful in our Fairy Tales."

"And what renders it more wonderful," observed the vicar, "is its being all true."

So saying, the antiquary took a key of pigmy dimensions from the pocket of his waistcoat, and proceeded to a cumbrous ebony cabinet which stood in a deep recess, and displayed an antique structure, and curiously-carved allegorical devices by the celebrated Gibbons, in strict unison with that air of mystery with which the vicar had thought proper to invest its contents. It was supported by gigantic eagles' claws; its keyhole was surrounded by hissing snakes; while the head of Cerberus, which constituted the handle, appeared as if placed to guard the entrance. The children were upon the tiptoe of expectation and impatience—the vicar applied the key with the wonder-stirring exclamation of "OPEN SESAMA!"—the lock yielded, and the doors flew open. Disappointment and chagrin were visibly depicted on the countenances of the brothers and sisters.

"And so," exclaimed Tom, "this fine magic gallery turns out to be nothing more than a box full of rusty halfpence!"

"I am sure," said Louisa, "it was quite unnecessary to have engaged Cerberus as a sentinel over such rubbish!"

"Hush!" cried the vicar; "you talk like one not initiated in the mysteries of enchantment: have you not read, that under its spells the meanest objects have assumed forms of splendour and magnificence?"*

"Like the fabled touch of the Phrygian monarch," said Mrs Seymour, "which we are told transmuted the meanest materials into gold."

"Or the infatuated brain of Don Quixote, which converted the barber's basin into Mambrino's golden helmet," added her husband.

"In like manner, then, may treasures of the greatest value, as in the instance before us, appear to ordinary eyes as mean and worthless."

"This cabinet," continued Mr Twaddleton, "is under the influence of a potent magician; by the touch of her wand, it would become irradiated as with magical light, and these rusty coins would be transformed into all those various objects of interest and delight which I had promised to show you."

Tom and Louisa looked at the coins, then at the vicar, and afterwards at Mr Seymour, to whom they cast an inquiring glance.

"Then, pray," exclaimed Tom, "wave this mighty wand of your enchantress, and fulfil your promise."

"The enchantress," replied the vicar, "is not disposed to grant her favours to those by whom she has not been propitiated."

"And what ceremony does she require?" inquired Louisa.

"The perusal of sundry mystic volumes; and the consumption of a midnight lamp at her altar," replied the vicar.

"Do you not comprehend the allegory?" said Mr Seymour. "The enchanted gallery is no other than a collection of antique medals;—the potent enchantress, ERUDITION, or that classical learning, without which they appear of less value than so many rusty halfpence."

"You are right," cried Mr Twaddleton; "the poetical import of a device can be alone felt and appreciated by those who are acquainted with the classical subjects to which it alludes; for, as Addison forcibly observes, there is often as much thought on the reverse of a medal as in a canto of Spenser; besides, how frequently do you meet with hints and suggestions in an ancient poet, that give a complete illustration to the actions, ornaments, and antiquities which are found on coins! In short, the person who examines a collection of medals, without a competent knowledge of the classics, is like him who would explore a subterranean cavern without the aid of a torch."

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* In the legends of Scottish superstition, the magic power of imposing upon the eyesight was termed *Glamour*.

"It had much of glamour might:
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nutshell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth."

Lay of the Last Minstrel.—Canto iii. 9.

"I have already learned one fact," said Louisa, "with which I was certainly unacquainted; that the ancients possessed a much greater variety of money than modern nations." (8.)

"Of that, my dear," replied the vicar, "there is some doubt;—the learned are divided upon the question: some authors maintain that every medal, and even medallion, had its fixed and regular price in payments, while others, on the contrary, assert that we are not in the possession of any real money of the ancients, and that the medals never had any currency as coins. The truth probably is between these two extremes."

"If these medals were not used as money," observed Louisa, "for what purposes could they have been coined?"

"'*Pro gemmis*,' as gems. They are the monuments of historic truth, and serve to perpetuate the memory of great actions; and, faithful to its charge of fame, the medal has transmitted events, the history of which must, otherwise, have long since perished. Nay, more," exclaimed the vicar, his voice rising as he became warmed by his subject, "the lamp of history has been often extinguished, and the medalist has collected sparks from the ashes of antiquity which have rekindled its flame. You perceive, therefore," continued the reverend antiquary, "that such collections are of the highest importance, and if your papa will allow you to pass a morning in their examination, I shall easily bring you to admit, that I have not exaggerated the wonders of my magic gallery. I will convince you that it contains a series of original miniature portraits of the greatest heroes of antiquity; a compendious chart of history, chronology, and heathen mythology; a system of classic architecture; and an accurate commentary upon the more celebrated poems of Greece and Rome. Ay, and I will show you a faithful resemblance of the very ship that carried Æneas to Italy, and of the lofty poop from which the luckless Palinurus fell into the ocean."

"Of course," said Tom, "you will show us the likeness of your favourite, Virgil."

"I grieve to confess," replied the vicar, "that the portrait so generally believed to be authentic, has been lately proved to be that of an orphan muse palmed upon us by Ursinus; as to its paternity, I can only say that it is a gem without an inscription, or even an attribute."

Mr Twaddleton then favoured Mr and Mrs Seymour with a sight of some of those rarer medals, which he considered as constituting the gems of his collection.

"You do not mean to say," exclaimed Tom, as he seized a small coin, "that this *brass* piece is of more value than the large coin of gold that lies next to it?"

"Mercy upon us!" cried the vicar, in a tone of agony, "how the boy handles it!—restore it to its place—gently—gently—that 'little brass piece,' as you call it, is gold, and although it might not have been worth one guinea fifteen hundred years ago, is now valued at a hundred. It is a coin of Ptolemy VIII. of Egypt. On the obverse is the portrait of the king beautifully raised; on the reverse a cornucopia. I do not believe that the coin was known to Pinkerton when he wrote his Essay."

"There is certainly," said Mr Seymour, "something very inexplicable in the tastes and enthusiastic feelings of you patrons of antiquity."

"The antiquary," observed the vicar, "does not regard a cabinet of medals as a treasure of money, but of knowledge; nor does he fancy any charms in gold, but in the figures that adorn it; it is not the metal, but the erudition, that stamps it with value."

Mr Twaddleton now passed on to a different compartment of his cabinet, observing, that he must exhibit a few of his Roman treasures. "Behold," said he, "two gems of inappreciable value; never do I look upon them but with feelings of the purest delight. Let my young friends come nearer and inspect them minutely. This is a large brass coin of Tiberius, and was current when Christ was upon the earth; next to it lies a silver *Denarius* of the same Emperor; its value was about equal to sevenpence of our money, and was the coin that tempted Judas to betray his Master."

"I think," said Mrs Seymour, "I have heard you speak of some English coins of rarity and interest."

"True, Madam, very true, but they are in another cabinet: before I close the present one, I will, with your permission, give you a glimpse at my Sulphurs, Paduans, and Beckers."

"Paduans and Beckers!" exclaimed Mr Seymour, "and pray what may they be? I never before heard the terms."

"'My poverty but not my will consents.' The antiquary who is poor in purse," observed the vicar, "must needs be contented with being rich in counterfeits, or, I ought rather to have said, in possessing copies instead of originals. Becker was an artist of Frankfort, who excelled in imitating ancient coins, but he never used his skill for the purpose of deception, but honestly sold his productions as avowed copies, which are admitted into the cabinets of the curious under the name of *Beckers*. The *Paduans*," the vicar added, "derived their names from two brothers at Padua, celebrated for the accuracy with which they imitated large Roman coins."

"I suppose we shall soon have *Electrotype* collections," said Mr Seymour.

"Undoubtedly; and as such impressions must of necessity be minutely faithful, they will possess a value of their own, which can never attach to modelled copies," observed the vicar.

The antiquary now directed the attention of Mrs Seymour to his English coins. "This," said he, "is a shilling of Henry VII., curious as being the first shilling ever struck: it was presented to me by a college friend some years ago, and I have been lately informed that it is so rare as to fetch twenty-five pounds; but let me beg you to examine attentively this curious little treasure," said the vicar, his eyes twinkling with pleasure as he placed the dainty morsel in the hand of Mrs Seymour; "it is," continued he, "a silver groat of Perkin Warbeck; on one side are the royal arms, but without a name; they are surmounted, you perceive, with an arched crown, and placed between a fleur-de-lis and a rose."

"What is the inscription?" asked Mrs Seymour.

"Say *legend*, Madam, if you please; the words are '*Domine, salvum fac regem*,' the date 1494. The coin is supposed to have been struck by the order of the Duchess of Burgundy for Perkin Warbeck, when he set out to invade England."

"Pray," said Tom, "have you got a Queen Anne's farthing?"

"It is really curious," observed the vicar, "that well-informed persons should still continue to be deceived with regard to the value of this coin. The absurd notion of its being worth £100 arose from an advertisement of an old lady, who had lost one, stating it to be one of the only three known in the world, and worth at least £100. The truth is, I understand from my much-valued friend of Tavistock Street, that these farthings generally fetch from five to twenty shillings each; there are several different types of them, but the only one intended for currency is that bearing the date of 1714; all the others were struck as patterns. This is certainly scarce, in consequence of the death of the Queen taking place before the coinage was finished. The farthing and sixpence of Oliver Cromwell are much more scarce and valuable; the one generally brings £10, the other as much as £25. It appears that, after Oliver had stamped his head upon them, he was afraid to issue them as current coins, which accounts for the few which have been handed down to us."

"You remind me," said Mr Seymour, "of a story I lately heard of a crown-piece of Oliver selling at a public auction for as much as two hundred guineas. Can it be possible?"

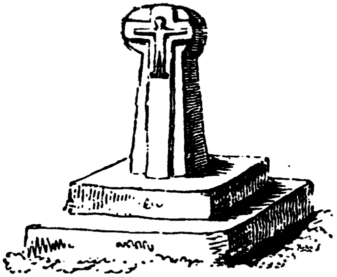
"You labour under a mistake," answered the vicar; "the coin you allude to is known amongst collectors by the name of the Petition crown of Charles the Second, and it is undoubtedly a most inimitable piece of workmanship. The story is this:—Simon, the artist, had been employed by Oliver Cromwell, and at the Restoration, in order to obtain the patronage of Charles, executed the crown-piece in question. It resembles in its general appearance the common milled five-shilling piece; but on the edging there are two lines of letters beautifully executed. The words are, '*Thomas Simon most humbly prays your Majesty to compare this his tryal piece with the Dutch, and if more truly drawn and embossed, more gracefully ordered, and more accurately engraven, to relieve him.*'"

"And what said Charles to it?" inquired Mrs Seymour.

"Charles," said the vicar, "took no notice of him, on account of his having worked for Cromwell, and the poor artist shortly afterwards died of a broken heart."

"Well," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "his manes must be surely appeased, if his crowns now sell for two hundred guineas each."

The party, soon after this exhibition, quitted the vicarage, highly gratified, and returned to the Lodge, where, after the usual ceremonies of the toilet, they sat down to dinner, in the enjoyment of which we will now leave them, and put an end to the present chapter.



CHAPTER III.

"THE table-cloth is removed," cried Tom, as he cast a sly glance through the open window of the dining-room.

"It is, my boy," replied Mr Twaddleton; "'*Diffugere nives*,' as the poet has it."

"'*Et redeunt jam gramina campis*,'" added Mr Seymour, archly, as he pointed to the *verdant* luxuries spread over the table.

"'*Et decrescentia flumina prœtereunt*,'" continued the vicar, with a smile, as he passed the nearly-exhausted bottle; "but, psha! enough of wine and quotation. Come, let us join the children."

Mr Twaddleton, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Seymour, and Louisa, rose from the table, and proceeded to the lawn.

"The gravitation of Tom's ball," said Mr Seymour, "furnished an ample subject for our morning's diversion; let us try whether its other motions will not suggest further objects of inquiry."

"I well remember," observed Louisa, "that Mrs Marcet extols that apple, the fall of which attracted the notice of Sir Isaac Newton,* above all the apples that have ever been sung by the poets: and she declares that the apple presented to Venus by Paris; the golden apples through which Atalanta lost the race; nay, even the apple which William Tell shot from the head of his own son, cannot be brought into comparison with it."

"Well said! Mrs Marcet," exclaimed Mr Seymour; "upon my word, had the mother of mankind used but half such eloquence in praise of an apple, we cannot wonder at its influence."

"What honours, then," continued Louisa, "shall we decree to Tom's ball, if it instructs us in the first principles of philosophy?"

"We are trifling," observed Mr Seymour; and, so saying, he took the ball from Tom's hand, and rolling it along the ground, exclaimed, "There it goes, performing, as you may perceive, two different kinds of motion at the same time; it turns round, or revolves on its *axis;* and goes straight forward, or, to speak more philosophically, performs a *rectilinear* motion."

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* The story of the fall of the apple having suggested to Newton the nature of universal gravitation has been questioned. It is, however, an historical fact that an apple-tree formerly stood near his house, and that upon its having been blown down, such was the veneration entertained for its remains, that a chair was constructed out of them.

Tom said that he did not exactly comprehend what was meant by the *axis*. His father, therefore, informed him that the axis of a revolving body was an imaginary line, which was itself at rest, but about which all its other parts turned, or rotated. "But," continued he, "can you tell me whether you understand what is meant by the word *motion?*"

"If he can," exclaimed the vicar, "he is a cleverer fellow than the wisest philosopher of antiquity, who, upon being asked the very same question, is said to have walked across the room, and to have replied, 'You see it, but what it is I cannot tell you.'"

"Your ancient acquaintances," observed Mr Seymour, "entertained some very strange notions touching this said subject of motion. If I remember right, Diodorus denied its very existence; but we are told that he did not himself remain *unmoved* when he dislocated his shoulder, and the surgeon kept him in torture while he endeavoured to convince him, by his own mode of reasoning, that the bone could not have moved out of its place. We have, however, at present, nothing to do with the ancients; the philosophers of our own times agree in defining motion to be '*the act of a body changing its situation with regard to any other;*' and you will, therefore, readily perceive that this may actually happen to a body while it remains absolutely at rest."

"Well, that beats all the paradoxes I ever heard," cried Tom; "a body, then, may be in motion while it is at rest?"

"Certainly," replied Mr Seymour; "it may be *relatively* in motion, while it is *absolutely* at rest."

"How can a body change its place," said Louisa, "except by moving?"

"Very readily," answered her father; "it may have its relative situation changed with respect to surrounding objects. There is your ball, and here is a stone; has not each of them a particular situation with respect to the other; and by moving one, do I not change the *relative* situation of both?"

"I perceive your meaning," said Tom.

"To prevent confusion, therefore, in our ideas, it became necessary to distinguish these two kinds of motion from each other by appropriate terms; and, accordingly, where there has been an actual change of place, in the common meaning of the term, the motion which produced it is termed ABSOLUTE motion; whereas, on the contrary, when the situation has been only relatively changed, by an alteration in the position of surrounding objects, the body not undergoing any change in space, the motion is said to be RELATIVE."

"Surely, papa," said Louisa, "no person can ever mistake *relative* for *absolute* motion; what, then, is the use of such frivolous distinctions? When a body really moves, we can observe it in the act of changing its place, and no difficulty can arise about the matter."

"Nothing, my dear, is more fallacious than our vision; the earth appears motionless, and the sun and stars *seem* as if they revolved round it; but it is scarcely necessary for me to inform you that our globe is constantly moving with considerable velocity, while the sun remains at rest. Mr Sadler, the famous aëronaut," continued Mr Seymour, "informed me that he was never sensible of the motion of the balloon in any of his excursions, but that as he ascended into the air, the earth always appeared as if sinking beneath him, and as he descended, as if rising to meet him."

Mr Twaddleton here observed that he had heard a very curious anecdote, when he was last in London, which fully confirmed the truth of Mr Sadler's statement. "An aëronaut," said he, "whose name I cannot at this moment recollect, had recently published a map of his voyage, and, instead of proceeding in any one line of direction, his track absolutely appeared in the form of circles, connected with each other like the links of a chain: this occasioned considerable astonishment, and, of course, some speculation, until it was at length discovered that his apparent journey was to be attributed to the rotatory motion of the balloon, which the voyager, not feeling, had never suspected."

"And what," asked Tom, "could have been the reason of his not having felt the motion?"

His father explained to him, that we are only conscious of being in motion when the conveyance in which we are placed suffers some impediment in its progress. "If," said he, "you were to close your eyes, when sailing on calm water, with a steady breeze, you would not perceive that you were moving: for you could not *feel* the motion, and you could only *see* it by observing the change of place in the different objects on the shore; and then it would be almost impossible, without the aid of reason and experience, to believe that the shore itself was not in motion, and that you were at rest. I very lately experienced a similar delusion in a railway carriage, which was stationary, but which all the passengers declared was in motion, in consequence of the passing of the neighbouring train. I shall, however, be able to explain this subject more clearly by an optical toy which I have in preparation."

Mrs Seymour here repeated the following passage from that interesting novel "Anastasius," which she observed was beautifully descriptive of the illusive appearance to which their father had just referred:—

"The gradually-increasing breeze carried us rapidly out of the Straits of Chio. The different objects on the shore,—mountains,—valleys,—villages,—and steeples,—seemed in swift succession, first advancing to meet us, then halting an instant alongside our vessel, as if to greet us on our passage, and, lastly, again gliding off with equal speed; till, launched into the open main, we saw the whole line of coast gradually dissolve in distant darkness."

"That is indeed a beautiful and very apposite illustration," said Mr Seymour; "and I think Louisa will now admit, that it is not quite so easy, as she at first imagined, to distinguish between *Absolute* and *Relative* motion."

As the children now understood what was meant by the term *Motion*, their father asked them whether they could tell him what produced it.

"I can make a body move by various means," answered Tom.

"But they may all be reduced to one," said Mr Seymour; "viz., some exertion which is called *Force*."

"And what is *Force?*" asked Tom.

"For our present purpose it is sufficient to state that it is a power in Nature capable of producing motion, whether in the masses or particles of matter, which we can no more create than we can create matter; we find it ready at our hands, emanating from various sources, such as gravity, heat, light, electricity, and life; and in short, wherever an equilibrium in Nature is disturbed, the reaction or effort to re-establish it, develops Force. And farther, let me add, that we can no more destroy Force than we can create it: we may evoke it in one form by its consumption in another; we may accumulate it at the expense of time, and store it up to be doled out on demand; we may cast it away, but where we dismiss it, there will it do its work. For the present, you must take this for granted; you will, hereafter, have ample opportunities for testing its truth (9). The next important fact to be impressed upon your memory is, that *a body always moves in the direction of the force which impels it, and with a velocity or rate of motion which is proportional to its degree or impulse;* and were there no other forces in action but that single one which originated the motion, the body would proceed onwards in a right line, and with a *uniform* velocity for ever."

"For ever!" exclaimed Louisa.

"Ay, my dear, *for ever:* but we will discuss that question presently; you must first tell me whether you understand what is meant by *uniform* velocity."

"I suppose that *uniform* velocity is that which is regular, and of an equal rate throughout."

"Philosophers," replied her father, "call the motion of a body *uniform*, when it passes over equal spaces in equal times. Now, Tom, it is your turn to answer a question. Can you describe the meaning of the terms *Accelerated* and *Retarded* motion?"

"I conclude that motion is said to be *accelerated* when it moves every moment quicker and quicker; and to be *retarded* when it moves slower and slower."

"You are perfectly right; and gravity may either act in occasioning the one or the other: our experiment at the well this morning afforded you an example of gravity producing a regularly-accelerated motion. I did not fully explain the fact at the time, because I was desirous of avoiding too many new ideas at once: we must win our way slowly and cautiously through the mazes of philosophy. I will, however, now endeavour to give you as clear an explanation as the subject will allow. It is, I think, evident, that if, at the moment you dropped the stone from your hand, the force of gravity could have been suspended, it would have descended to the bottom of the well with a uniform velocity; because there could have been nothing either to accelerate or retard its motion. But this was not the case, for the power of gravity was in constant operation; and, if you keep this fact in mind, you will readily understand how the velocity became accelerated: for suppose the impulse given by gravity to the stone, during the first instant of its descent, be equal to *one*, the next instant we shall find that an additional impulse gives the stone an additional velocity equal to *one*, so that the accumulated velocity is now equal to *two;* the following instant, again, increases the velocity to *three*, and so on till the stone reaches the bottom."

Mr Twaddleton observed, the fact might be shortly expressed by saying, that "the effects of preceding impulses must be added to subsequent velocities."

Mr Seymour then remarked that the same explanation would apply to *retarded* velocity. "If," said he, "you throw a stone perpendicularly upwards, the velocity will be as much *retarded*, as it was in the other case *accelerated*, by gravity; the consequence of which is, that it will be exactly the same length of time ascending that it was descending."

"I should have thought the very reverse," cried Louisa, "and that it would have fallen quicker than it rose."

"You have forgotten to take into account the force with which the stone is thrown upwards, and which is destroyed by gravity before it begins to descend."

"Certainly," answered Louisa; "but the force given to a stone in throwing it upwards cannot always be equal to the force of gravity in bringing it down again; for the force of gravity is always the same, while the force given to the stone is entirely optional. I may throw it up gently or otherwise, as I please."

"If you throw it gently," said her father, "it will not rise high, and gravity will soon bring it down again; if you throw it with violence, it will rise much higher, and gravity will be longer in bringing it back to the ground. Suppose, for instance, that you throw it with a force that will make it rise only sixteen feet; in that case, you know, it will fall in one second of time. Now it is proved by experiment, that an impulse requisite to project a body sixteen feet upwards, will make it ascend that height in one second of time; here, then, the times of ascent and descent are equal. But, supposing it be required to throw a stone twice that height, the force must be proportionally greater. You see, then, that the impulse of projection, in throwing a body upwards, is always equal to the action of the force of gravity during its descent; and that it is the greater or less distance to which the body rises that makes these two forces balance each other."

"Thank you, dear papa, for the pains you have taken in explaining this subject to us."

"Nay," replied Mr Seymour, "bestow your thanks upon those to whom they are more justly due. Mrs Marcet is entitled to the merit of this explanation, for I obtained it from her 'Conversations.' Before I quit this subject, I would just observe that, when we come to the consideration of the bow and arrow, you will, by the application of the law I have endeavoured to expound, be enabled to ascertain the height to which your arrow may ascend, with the same facility you discovered the depth of the well; for, since the times of ascent and descent are equal, you have only to determine the number of seconds which intervene between the instant at which the arrow quits the bow to that at which it falls to the ground, and halving them, to make the usual calculation.—But let us proceed to another subject. Roll the ball hither, Tom; roll the ball hither, I say! you stand as if you thought it would advance to us of its own accord."

"I know a little better than that, too," cried Tom; "no body can move without the application of some force."

"Nor stop either," added Mr Seymour, "when it is once in motion; for matter is equally indifferent to both rest and motion."

"And yet, papa," cried Louisa, "unfortunately for your assertion, the ball stopped just now, and I am sure that no force was used to make it do so."

"And pray, Miss Pert, why are you so sure that no force was opposed to its progress? I begin to fear that my lesson has been thrown away upon you, or you would not, surely, have concluded so falsely."

The vicar here interposed, observing that, simple as the question might appear to those who had studied it, the fact was so contrary to everything that passed before us, that Mr Seymour ought not to feel any surprise at the scepticism of his daughter; he begged to remind him that the truth, apparent as it doubtless now was, lay hid for ages before the sagacity of Galileo brought it to light.

Mr Seymour admitted the justice of this remark, and proceeded in his explanation.

"I think," said he, "you will readily allow that matter cannot, in itself, possess any power of changing its condition: it can, therefore, no more destroy, than it can originate its own motion; when it is at rest, it must ever remain so, unless some force can be applied that can impart to it activity; and when once in motion, it must continue to move until some counteracting force stops it. To believe otherwise, you must suppose that matter possesses in itself a power to alter its condition, which is perfectly absurd."

"And yet," said Tom, "when I see my ball or marble stop of its own accord, how can you blame me for believing it possible?"

"Your difficulty arises from your ignorance of the existence of certain forces which act upon the rolling ball or marble. Its progress, as it rolls along, is impeded and ultimately stopped by the rubbing, or friction, occasioned by its passage over the ground; and this will be greater or less, according to the degree of roughness of the surface; if it be small, the ball will continue for a longer time in motion: you must have observed that your marble has always rolled much further on a smooth pavement than on a rough gravel walk."

"Certainly," said Tom, "and I well remember, that when we played at *ring-taw* last winter on the ice, we were obliged, for this very reason, to extend the usual boundaries."

"Exactly so; and your marble, under such circumstances, would run along like the enchanted bowl of the Dervise, in the Arabian Nights. Is it not evident, then, that the motion of a body is stopped by some opposing force; and that, if this could be entirely removed, the body would continue to move for ever?"

"What a provoking thing this friction is!" said Tom; "it is always interfering with our experiments."

"Provoking, is it? I fancy," said Mr Seymour, "that you would be much more provoked by the loss of it: without it you could not walk, nor even hold an object in your hands; and yet everything around you would be in perpetual motion, performing one universal and interminable dance."

"I can readily understand, from what you have said, that, if friction were removed, motion might continue; but pray how is it that we should be unable to walk, or to hold anything in our hands?" inquired Louisa.

"It is the friction of the ground which, at every step we take, prevents the foot from sliding back, and thus enables us to push the body forwards. Every one must have felt how difficult it is to walk on ice, where the friction is only diminished, not entirely removed," answered her father; "and as to holding any object," continued he, "it is the friction of the body to which we apply our hands that enables us to hold it firmly."

"To be sure," exclaimed the vicar: "why, my boy, you must surely remember that in ancient combats it was the custom to rub the body with oil, that the adversary might not be able to keep his grasp."

"Well," said Tom, "our houses, I suppose, would remain firm, and we might sit quietly in our chairs, at all events."

"Not so," replied Mr Seymour, "for even granting that you had houses and chairs, which, without the existence of friction would never exist, the stability of the structures could never be secured; the slightest breath would be sufficient to make the stones or bricks slide off from each other, and to reduce your dwellings into dancing ruins."

Tom and Louisa, after some further discussion, both admitted the justness of the argument; but, at the same time, would have been better satisfied if the fact could have been proved by actual experiment. Mr Seymour told them that the perpetual revolution of the earth and heavenly bodies, where no friction whatever existed, afforded a proof which ought to satisfy them; and especially, since it agreed with those views which were proved to be true by an examination of what took place on the surface of our own globe.*

We will, therefore, with the permission of our readers, consider this point as settled, and proceed with the young philosophers to the investigation of some other topics connected with the doctrine of motion.

"Since a body at rest," said Mr Seymour, "can only be set in motion, or, when in motion, be brought to rest, by the impression of some force, it must follow, that it can only move in the direction in which such a force may act; and, moreover, that the degree of motion, or the *velocity*, must, other things being equal, be in proportion to the degree of force used."

"Why, truly," cried the vicar, "my young friends must of necessity admit that fact; for the body, not having any will of its own, as you say, must needs, if it move at all, go the road it is driven."

"Yes," added Mr Seymour, "and it must go with a velocity in proportion to the force with which it is driven."

"Doubtless, doubtless," cried the vicar, "you admit that also: do you not, my young friends and playmates?"

It is hardly necessary to state that the children instantly assented to these propositions. The vicar had placed them in so clear and popular a point of view, as to be intelligible to the lowest capacities.

"With these admissions, then, my dear children," said their father, "I shall have but little difficulty in convincing you of the truth of the other laws by which the direction of moving bodies is governed. At present, however, it is not my intention to enter upon this subject; you have some preliminary knowledge to acquire before you can understand what is termed the *Composition and Resolution of Forces.*"

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* The retardation of Encke's comet, and other facts do, however, render a small amount of friction probable, the resisting medium being the hypothetical ether.—ED.

"I shall not easily forget," said Louisa, "that matter is perfectly passive, and that it can neither put itself in motion when at rest, nor stop itself when in motion."

"This indifference to rest or motion," replied Mr Seymour, "has been termed the *Vis Inertiæ* of matter."

"A very objectionable term,—a very puzzling expression," exclaimed the vicar; "to denote a mere state of passive indifference by the term *Vis*, or power, does appear to me, who, not being a punster, have been in the habit of connecting words with ideas, as excessively absurd."

"I allow," said Mr Seymour, "that the simple word *Inertia* would have been preferable; but we are bound to receive an expression which has been long current. I suppose, however, you know that the addition of *Vis* originated with Kepler, who, like my boy Tom, could not help thinking that the disposition of a body either to maintain or resist motion, indicated something very like power; but we will not waste our time upon verbal disquisitions, although I cannot part with you, my dear vicar, without reminding you that there is ample classical authority for this apparent contradiction of terms. The connecting two ideas, which at first sight appear opposed to each other, constituted a figure of speech much used both by the Greeks and Romans."

"Unquestionably," said the vicar: "Euripides delighted in it, and that was a sufficient reason for Aristophanes to satirise it. Horace, too, has given us several examples of it, as '*Insaniens Sapientia*,' '*Strenua Inertia*;' and in our own times we hear of lawyers talking of *long Briefs!*"

"It is clear," continued Mr Seymour, "that matter, at rest, resists being put in motion; the degree of that resistance is always in proportion to the degree of force applied to put it in motion; or, to speak more philosophically, that *Action and Reaction are equal, and in opposite directions.*"

"You, surely, do not mean to say," exclaimed Tom, "that if I strike my marble, the marble strikes my hand with the same force in return?"

"Precisely; that is my meaning."

"What!" cried Louisa, "if a man strikes another on the face with his hand, do you seriously maintain that both parties suffer the same pain?"

"Oh, no, no," said Tom, "papa can never intend to say that; I am quite sure, if it were the case, Mr Pearson would not be so fond of boxing our ears."

Mr Seymour answered this question, by observing that, if the hand possessed the same degree of feeling as the face, they would both suffer equally under the conflict. "If," continued he, "you strike a glass bottle with an iron hammer, the blow will be received by the hammer and the glass; and it is quite immaterial whether the hammer be moved against the bottle at rest, or the bottle be moved against the hammer at rest, yet the bottle will be broken, though the hammer be not injured; because the same blow which is sufficient to shiver the glass is not sufficient to break or injure the lump of iron. In like manner, the blow that is sufficient to pain your sensitive face, and make your ears tingle, will not occasion the least annoyance to the obtuse hand of your preceptor. The operation of this law," continued Mr Seymour, "will be exemplified in every step of our progress. When the marble, as it rolls along, strikes any obstacle, it receives, in return, a corresponding blow, which will be found to influence its subsequent direction. The peg of the top; as it rubs on the ground is as much influenced by the friction, as if a force were actually applied to it when in a state of rest; and when we consider the forces by which the kite is made to ascend into the air, you will learn, from the same law, the nature of that advantage which you derive from running with it."

The vicar observed that the subject of *Momentum*, might be introduced, and advantageously explained upon this occasion.

"Momentum," said Tom; "and pray what is that?"

"It is a power," replied his father, "intimately connected with motion; and, therefore, as your friend, the vicar, justly remarks, may be very properly introduced before we quit that subject.—It is the force with which a body in motion strikes against another body."

"That," observed Tom, "must of course depend upon the velocity of the body's motion."

"Undoubtedly, my dear; the quicker a body moves, the greater must be the force with which it would strike against another body; but we also know that the heavier a body is, the greater also will be its force; so that *momentum*, you perceive, must have a relation to both these circumstances, viz., velocity and weight; or, to speak more correctly, *the momentum of a body is composed of its quantity of matter multiplied by its quantity of motion:* for example, if the weight of a body be represented by the number 3, and its velocity also by 3, its *momentum* will be represented by $3+3=9$; so that, in producing momentum, increased velocity will always compensate for deficiency of matter, and a light body may thus be made a more effective force than a heavy one, provided that its velocity be proportionally increased; thus, a small ball, weighing only *two pounds*, and moving at the rate of *five hundred feet* in a second, will produce as much effect as a cannon-ball of *ten pounds* in weight, provided it moved only at the rate of *one hundred feet*, in the same time."

"Let me see," cried Tom, "whether I understand your statement.

We must multiply, as you say, the weight by the velocity; the weight of the small ball you state at two pounds, and it travels at the rate of five hundred feet in a second; then its momentum must be a thousand. The weight of the great ball is ten pounds, its velocity only a hundred feet, then its momentum must also be a thousand; because in both cases, the sums multiplied into each other will give the same product."

"Exactly: and thus you perceive that the small ball becomes an exact balance to the larger one; the first making out in motion what it wanted in matter, while the latter makes out in matter what it wanted in motion. I wish you to keep this law of *Momentum* in your remembrance; upon it depends the action of all the *mechanical powers* (10), as they are termed; and which I shall hereafter more fully explain."

"I have heard," said Louisa, "that a feather might be made to produce as much havoc as a cannon-shot, if you could give it sufficient velocity."

"Unquestionably: but there is a practical difficulty in the attempt, from the resistance of the air, which increases, as you have already seen in the experiment of the paper and penny-piece (p. 25), as the weight of a body decreases; and which explains the adage, that '*Hercules cannot throw a feather farther than a child.*' Were it not for this resistance of the air, a hailstone falling from the clouds would acquire such a momentum, from its accelerated velocity, as to descend like a bullet from a gun, and destroy everything before it; even those genial showers which refresh us in the spring and summer months, would, without such a provision, destroy the herbage they are so well calculated to cherish. Had the elephant possessed the mobility of the beetle, it would have overturned mountains. From this view of the subject of momentum," continued Mr Seymour, "you will easily understand why the immense battering-rams, used by the ancients in the art of war, should have given place to cannon-balls of but a few pounds in weight. Suppose, for example, that the battering-ram of Vespasian weighed 100,000 pounds, and was moved, we will admit, with such a velocity, by strength of hands, as to pass through 20 feet in one second of time, and that this was found sufficient to demolish the walls of Jerusalem, can you tell me with what velocity a 32-pounder must move to do the same execution?"

"I will try," said Tom, as he took out his pencil and pocket-book, to make the calculation.

"Stop; I think you will hardly succeed without my guidance," said his father; "let us therefore work it out together: now you will readily perceive that we must in the first place determine the *momentum* of the battering-ram, by multiplying its weight by its velocity, or, in other words, by the space which it passes over in a second of time."

"That I understand."

"Very well," continued Mr Seymour, "its weight was 100,000 pounds, and its velocity such as to carry it through 20 feet in a second of time; now make the required calculation."

"I have done it—it is 2,000,000."

"You are quite right; now if this momentum, which must also be that of the cannon-ball, be divided by the weight of that ball, viz. 32 pounds, we shall obtain the velocity required, which is 62,500 feet."

Mr Twaddleton here observed, that he thought "his young friends and playmates" must have received, for that day, as much philosophy as they could conveniently carry away without fatigue. Mr Seymour concurred in this observation; and the more readily, as the path they had to travel was rugged, and beset with difficulties. "I will, therefore," said he, "not impose any further burthen upon them; but I will assist them in tying, into separate bundles, the materials which they have collected in their progress, in order that they may convey them away with greater ease and security. Know, then, my dear children," said the affectionate parent, "that you have this day been instructed in the three great Laws of Motion, viz. :—

I. *That every body will continue in a state of rest, until put into motion by some external force applied to it, and if that force be single, the motion so produced will be rectilinear,* i.e., *in the direction of a straight line.*

II. *Change of motion is always proportional to the moving force impressed, and is always made in the direction of the right line in which the force acts.*

III. *Action and Reaction are equal in equal quantities of matter, and act in contrary directions to each other."*

CHAPTER IV.

JUST as Mr Seymour was, on the following morning, stepping upon the lawn, with the intention of joining his children, Rosa and Fanny both made their appearance completely drenched with water, and dripping like mermaids.

"Heyday!" exclaimed their father, "how has this misfortune happened?"

"Do not be angry, papa," said Tom; "indeed, indeed, it was an accident. Fanny, observing the water-cart in the garden, had just begun to wheel it forward, when the water rushed over her like a wave of the sea, and, upon stopping the cart, it flew over with equal force on the opposite side, and deluged poor Rosa, who was walking in front of it."

"Well, well, lose no time in changing your clothes, and meet me again in half-an-hour."

At the appointed time the children reassembled on the lawn.

"And so then," said their father, "I perceive that my philosophical lesson of yesterday has been entirely lost upon you."

The children were unable to comprehend the meaning of this rebuke; but Mr Seymour proceeded:—

"I trust, however, that the accident of this morning will serve to impress it more forcibly upon your memory: one example is better than a hundred precepts."

Tom was more puzzled than ever.

"You have met with an accident; I will endeavour to convert it into a source of instruction, by showing you how the principles of natural philosophy may be brought to bear upon the most trivial concerns of life. You learned yesterday, that a body at rest offers a resistance to any force that would put it in motion, and that, when in motion, it equally opposes a state of rest; now let us apply this law for the explanation of the accident that has just befallen you. The butt was full of water; when you attempted to wheel it forward, the water resisted the motion thus communicated to the vessel, and from its *vis inertiæ*, or effort to remain at rest, rose up in a direction contrary to that in which the vessel moved, and consequently poured over; by this time, however, the mass of fluid had acquired the motion of the cart, when you suddenly stopped it, and the water, in endeavouring to continue its state of motion, from the same cause that it had just before resisted it, rose up on the opposite side and thus deluged poor Rosa."

Louisa was quite delighted with this simple and satisfactory application of philosophy, and observed, that she should not herself mind a thorough soaking, if it were afterwards rewarded by a scientific discovery.

"I will give you, then, another illustration of the same law of motion," said Mr Seymour, "which, instead of explaining an accident, may, perhaps, have the effect of preventing one. If, while you are sitting quietly on your horse, the animal starts forward, you will be in danger of falling off *backward;* but if, while you are galloping along it should stop suddenly, you will inevitably be thrown *forward* over the head of the animal."

"I clearly perceive," said Louisa, "that such would be my fate under the circumstances you state."

"Now, then, my dear children, since our friend the vicar cannot attend us at present, suppose we retire to the library, where I have an interesting experiment to perform, and a new toy ready for your inspection."

In compliance with their father's wishes, the children cheerfully returned to the library, when Mr Seymour presented Louisa with a BANDALORE. Most of our readers are, doubtless, acquainted with this elegant toy; but before we proceed to describe its construction, it may be interesting to learn something of its history. It is of French origin, and in the Memoirs of Mr Thomas Moore we have the following curious notice of it:—"The first instance I can recall of any attempt of mine at regular versicles, was on a certain toy, very fashionable about the year 1789 or 1790, called in French a '*Bandalore,*' or in English a '*Quiz.*' To such a ridiculous degree did the fancy of this toy pervade at that time all ranks and ages, that in the streets numbers of persons of both sexes were playing it up and down, as they walked along, or as my very doggrel described it—

> 'The ladies, too, when in the STREETS, or walking in the GREEN,
> Went *quizzing* on, to show their shapes, and graceful mien.'"

And Mr Moore adds, he was informed by Lord Plunket, that the Duke of Wellington (then Captain Wellesley, or Westley?) was in 1790, one of the aides-de-camp of the Lord-Lieutenant, and a member of the Irish House of Commons, and that during the whole time of the sitting of one of its Committees, he was playing with one of these toys, called *Quizzes.* It consists of two discs of wood, united to each other by a small axis, upon which a piece of string is affixed. When this string is wound round the axis, and the bandalore is suffered to run down from the hand, the end of the string being held by a loop on the fore-finger, its momentum winds up the string again, and thus it will continue for any length of time to descend from, and ascend to, the hand. It affords a good example of the operation of *vis inertiæ*, or what may, with equal propriety, be termed *the momentum of rotatory motion.* Its action may be compared to that of a wheel, which, running down a hill, acquires sufficient momentum to carry it up another. There are several toys which owe their operation to the same principle, of which we may particularize the windmill, whose fliers are pulled round by a string affixed to the axis of the sails. In playing with the bandalore, a certain address is required to prevent the sudden check which the toy would otherwise receive when it arrived at the end of the string, and which would necessarily so destroy its momentum as to prevent its winding itself up again. Mr Seymour then informed his young pupils that he had an experiment to exhibit, which would further illustrate, in a very pleasing manner, the truth of the doctrine of *vis inertiæ.* He accordingly inverted a wine-glass, and placed a shilling on its foot; and, having pushed it suddenly along the table, the coin flew off towards the operator, or in a direction opposite to that in which the glass was moving. He then replaced the shilling, and imparted to the glass a less sudden motion; and, when it had acquired sufficient velocity, he checked it, and the coin darted forward, leaving the glass behind it.

Louisa, upon witnessing this experiment, observed that she felt satisfied of the correctness of her father's statement, when he told her that, if the horse suddenly started forward, when she was at rest, she would be thrown off behind, and that if it should suddenly stop on the gallop, she would be precipitated over its head. The children arranged themselves around the table, in order to consider several curious toys which Mr Seymour had collected for the purpose of explaining the nature of the *Centre of Gravity.*

"But, in the first place," said Mr Seymour, "can you tell me, Tom, what is meant by *The Centre of Gravity?*"

"Its central point," answered the boy.

"Certainly not; the central point is termed its centre of *magnitude*, not that of gravity; and it is only when a body is of uniform density, and regular figure, that these centres of magnitude and gravity coincide, or fall in the same spot."

"I now remember that the centre of gravity is that point about which all the parts of a body exactly balance each other."

"Now you are right; it is, in other words, that point in which the whole weight, or gravitating influence of a body is, as it were, condensed or concentrated, and upon which, if the body be freely suspended, it will rest with security; and consequently, as long as this centre is supported, the body can never fall; while, in every other position, it will endeavour to descend to the lowest place at which it can arrive."

"Have all bodies, whatever may be their shape, a centre of gravity?" asked Louisa.

"Undoubtedly."

"And you say that every body will fall if this point is not supported?"

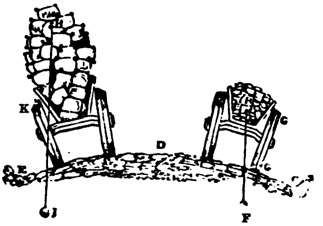
"Infallibly. And now, Tom," said Mr Seymour, "can you tell me what is meant by the *line of direction?*"

The young philosopher was unable to answer this question; and his father, therefore, informed him that, if a perpendicular line were drawn from the centre of gravity of a body to the centre of the earth, such a line would be termed the *line of direction;* along which every body, not supported, endeavours to fall; and he was also informed that if this said line fell within the base of a body, such a body was sure to stand; but never otherwise.

Louisa observed that she was not quite sure she understood her father's meaning, and, therefore, begged for further explanation.

"I will exemplify it, then," replied Mr Seymour, "by a drawing. Fig. 10 represents a load of stones in a cart moving upon the sloping road C D E: this load being low down in the cart, B will represent its centre of gravity, and B F its line of direction, which, you perceive, falls much within the supporting or lower wheel, G; and there cannot, therefore, be any danger of such a cart being overturned; but in fig. 11 the centre of gravity is raised from its former position to H, and H I is now the line of direction; which, falling without the base, or wheel, K, the load will not be supported, and must consequently fall. These figures," added Mr Seymour, "will also explain a fact which you must have frequently observed, that a body is stable or firm in proportion to the breadth of its base; hence the difficulty of sustaining a tall body, like a walking-stick, upon its narrow base; or that of balancing a hoop upon its edge, or a top upon its point; while, on the contrary, it is almost impossible to upset the cone or the pyramid, since, in the latter cases, the *line of direction* falls within the middle of the base, the centre of gravity of the body being necessarily low."

Fig. 11. Fig. 10,



"I suppose," observed Louisa, "that this is the reason why carriages, when too much loaded, are so apt to upset."

"Say, when too much loaded on their *tops*, and you will be right. As you now, I trust, understand this part of the subject, let us proceed a step further: if you take any body with a view to suspend it, is it not evident, that if it be suspended by that point in which the centre of gravity is situated, it must remain at rest in *any* position indifferently?"

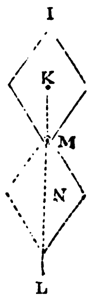
"I thought," said Tom, "we had already settled that question."

"True, my dear boy; but there is another question of great importance arising out of it, and which you have not yet considered: tell me, should the body be suspended on any other point, in what position it can rest?"

"I do not exactly understand the question."

"There are," replied his father, "only two positions in which it could rest, either where the centre of gravity is exactly *above*, or exactly *below* the point of suspension; so that, in short, this point shall be in the *line of direction*. Where the point of suspension is *below* the centre of gravity, it is extremely difficult to balance or support a tall body by such a method, because the centre of gravity is always endeavouring to get under the point of support. Look at this diagram, and you will readily comprehend my meaning. K is the centre of gravity of the diamond-shaped figure, which may be supported, or balanced, on a pin passing through it at M, as long as the centre of gravity, K, is immediately over the point of suspension, M; but if that centre is removed in the slightest degree, either to the right or left of its place K, the body will no longer retain its erect position I K M, but it will revolve upon M, and place itself in the situation indicated by the dotted lines beneath the point M, and its centre of gravity will now be removed to N, directly *under* M, and in the line K L, which, as you well know, is the line of direction. Have I rendered myself intelligible?"

Fig. 12.

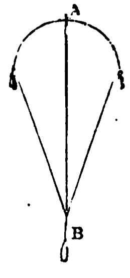


"I understand it perfectly," answered Tom.

"And do you also, my dear Louisa?"

Louisa's answer was equally satisfactory; and Mr Seymour went on to state that the information they had now acquired would enable them to ascertain the situation of the centre of gravity of any plane surface which was portable, notwithstanding it might possess the utmost irregularity of shape.

Fig. 13.



"You shall, for example," continued he, "find the centre of gravity in your kite."

"I cannot say," observed Tom, "how I should set about it."

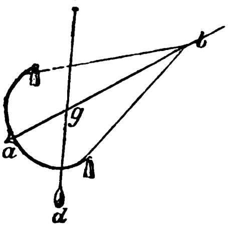
"Well, fetch your kite, and I will explain the method."

Tom soon produced it, and the tail having been removed, Mr Seymour proceeded as follows:—

"I now," said he, "suspend the kite by the loop at its bow, and since it is at rest, we know that the centre of gravity must be exactly below the point of suspension; if, therefore, we draw a perpendicular line from that point, which may be easily done by a plumb-line, with a weight attached to it, such a line will represent the *line of direction*, (as indicated by A B in fig. 13.)"

"It is clear enough," said Tom, "that the centre of gravity must lie in the line A B, but how are we to find in what part of it?"

Fig. 14.



"By suspending the kite in another direction," answered Mr Seymour, who then hung it up in the position represented at fig. 14, "and then by drawing another perpendicular from the new point of suspension."

"The centre of gravity," said Louisa, "will in that case be in the line *c d*, as it was before in that of A B."

"In both the lines?" exclaimed Tom, with some surprise; "it cannot be in two places."

"And therefore," added Mr Seymour, "it must be in that point in which the lines meet and cross each other;" so saying, he marked the spot *g* with his pencil, and then told his little scholars that he would soon convince them of the accuracy of the principle. He accordingly placed the head of the stick upon the pencil mark, and the kite was found to balance itself with great exactness.

"Quite true," said Tom, "that point must be the centre of gravity, for all the parts of the kite exactly balance each other about it."

"It is really," observed Louisa, "a very simple method of finding the centre of gravity."

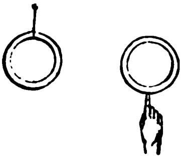
"It is," said Mr Seymour; "but you must remember that it will only apply to a certain description of bodies: when they are not portable, and will not admit of this kind of examination, their centres of gravity can only be ascertained by experiment or calculation, in which the weight, density, and situation of the respective materials must be taken into the account. Having proceeded thus far, you have next to learn that the centre of gravity is sometimes so situated as not to be *within* the body, but actually at some distance from it."

"Why, papa!" exclaimed Tom, "how can that possibly happen?"

"You shall hear. The centre of gravity, as you have just said, is that point about which all the parts of a body balance each other; but it may so happen that there is a vacant space at this point. Where, for example, is the centre of gravity of this ring? Must it not be in the space which the ring encircles?"

"I think it must," said Tom; "and yet how can it be ever supported without touching the ring?"

"That point cannot be supported," answered his father, "unless the ring be so held that the line of direction shall fall within the base of the support, which will be the case whether you poise the ring on the tip of your finger, or suspend it by a string, as represented in the figures which I have copied from the 'Conversations on Natural Philosophy.' I need scarcely add, that it will be more stably supported in the latter position, because the centre of gravity is below the point of suspension; whereas in the former the base is extremely narrow, and it will, consequently, require all the address of the balancer to prevent the centre of gravity from falling beyond it. As you are now in possession of all the leading principles upon which the operations of the centre of gravity depend, I shall put a few practical questions to you, in order that I may be satisfied you understand them. Tell me, therefore, why a person who is fearful of falling, as, for instance, when he leans forward, should invariably put forward one of his feet, as you did the other day, when you looked into Overton well."



"To increase his base," answered Tom; "whenever I lean greatly forward, I should throw the line of direction beyond it, did I not at the same instant put out one of my feet, so as to extend my base, and thus to cause the line to continue within it."

"Rightly answered; and, for the same reason, a porter, with a load on his back leans forward to prevent his burthen from throwing the line of direction out of the base behind. So the horse, in drawing a heavy weight, instinctively leans forward, in order to throw the whole of his weight as a counterbalance; and yet," observed Mr Seymour, "we are in the habit of ignorantly restraining him by a bearing-rein, in consequence of which he has to call in the aid of his muscles, by which a very unnecessary exhaustion of strength is produced. Thus is it that German and French horses draw heavy weights with apparently greater ease to themselves, because the Germans tie a horse's nose *downwards*, while the French, more wisely, leave them at perfect liberty. But to proceed. Did you ever observe the manner in which a woman carries a pail of water?"

"To be sure," said Tom; "she always stretches out one of her arms."

"The weight of the pail," continued Mr Seymour, "throws the centre of gravity on one side, and the woman, therefore, stretches out the opposite arm, in order to bring it back again into its original situation; did she not do this, she must, like the English draught-horses, exert her muscles as a counteracting force, which would greatly increase the fatigue of the operation: but a pail hanging on each arm is carried without difficulty, because they balance each other, and the centre of gravity remains supported by the feet."

"I see," said Louisa, "that all you have said about the woman and her pail must be true; but how could she have learned the principle which thus enabled her to keep the centre of gravity in its proper place?"

"By experience. It is very unlikely that she should ever have heard of such a principle, any more than those people who pack carts and waggons, and yet make up their loads with such accuracy as always to keep the line of direction in, or near, the middle of the base. But to proceed to another example:—have I not frequently cautioned you against jumping up suddenly in a boat? Can you tell me upon what principle such an operation must be attended with danger?"

"I suppose," said Tom, "for the very same reason that a waggon is more likely to be overturned when its top is too heavily laden; it would elevate the centre of gravity, and thereby render the line of direction liable to be thrown beyond the base, and so upset the boat."

Mr Seymour observed, that after this lesson he thought the balancing which Tom and Louisa had witnessed at Astley's Theatre last year would cease to appear so miraculous. Louisa declared that she had now discovered the whole mystery.

"You have doubtless perceived," said her father, "that the art entirely consists in dexterously altering the centre of gravity upon every new position of the body, so as constantly to preserve the line of direction within the base. Rope-dancers effect this by means of a long pole, the ends of which are loaded by weights, and which they hold across the rope. If you had paid sufficient attention to their movements, you must have perceived how steadily they fixed their eyes on some object near the rope, so as to discover the slightest deviation of their centre of gravity to one or the other of its sides, which they no sooner detect, than they instantly rectify it by a countervailing motion of their pole, and are thus enabled to preserve the line of direction within the narrow base. This very same expedient is frequently practised by ourselves; if we slip or stumble with one foot, we naturally extend the opposite arm, making the same use of it as the rope-dancer does of his pole. Many birds, also, by means of their flexible necks, vary the position of their centre of gravity in the same manner. When they sleep, they turn it towards the back, and place it under the wing, in order to lay the greatest weight on the point above the feet."

"What an interesting subject this is," cried Louisa, "and how many curious things it is capable of explaining!"

"Indeed is it; and I shall take an opportunity of pointing out several specimens of art (11) which are indebted for their stability to the scientific application of the principle we have been considering;—but I have now a paradox for you, Tom."

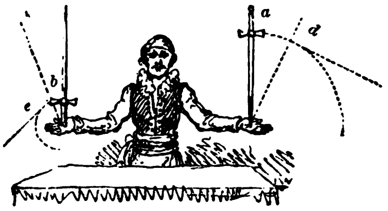
"Let us hear it, papa."

"How comes it that a stick, loaded with a weight at the upper extremity, can be kept in equilibrio, on the point of the finger, with much greater ease than when the weight is near the lower extremity, or, for instance, that a sword can be balanced on the finger much better when the hilt is uppermost?"

"That is indeed strange. I should have thought," replied Louisa, "that the higher the weight was placed above the point of support, the more readily would the line of direction have been thrown beyond the base."

"In that respect you are perfectly right; but the balancer will be able to restore it more easily in one case than in the other; since, for reasons which you will presently discover, the greater the circle which a body describes in falling, the less will be its tendency to fall. Look at the sketch which I have prepared for the explanation of this fact, and I think you will readily comprehend the reason of it.

"When the weight is at a considerable distance from the point of support, its centre of gravity, in deviating either on one side or the other from a perpendicular direction, describes a larger circle, as at *a*, than when the weight is very near to the centre of rotation or the point of support, as at *b*. But, in a large circle, an arc of any determinate extent, such as an inch, for example, describes a curve which deviates much less from the perpendicular than if the circle were less; as may be seen by comparing the positions of the sword at *d* and *e*; and the sword at *d* will not have so great a tendency to deviate further from the perpendicular, as that at *e*; for its tendency to deviate altogether from the perpendicular is greater, according as the tangent to that point of the arc, where it happens to be, approaches more to the vertical position. You see, then, that it is less difficult to balance a tall, than a shorter pole; and it is for the same reason that a person can walk with greater security on high than on low stilts."



"That is very clear," said Louisa, "although, before your explanation, I always associated the idea of difficulty with their height."

"I suppose," added Tom, "that the whole art of walking on stilts may be explained by the principles you have taught us."

"Undoubtedly it may; for the equilibrium is preserved by varying the position of the body, and thus keeping the centre of gravity within the base."

"It must be a great exertion," observed Louisa.

"Before custom has rendered it familiar; after which, there is no more fatigue in walking on stilts than in walking on our feet. There is a district in the south of France, near Bordeaux, called the Desert of Landes, which runs along the sea-coast between the mouths of the Adour and Gironde, where all the shepherds are mounted on stilts; on which they move with perfect freedom and astonishing rapidity; and so easily does habit enable them to preserve their balance, that they run, jump, stoop, and even dance, with ease and security."*

"How very odd!" said Tom; "what can be their motive for such a strange habit?"

"Its objects," replied his father, "are important: to keep the feet out of the water, which, during the winter, is deep on the sands; and to defend them from the heated sand during the summer, in addition to which, the sphere of vision over so perfect a flat is materially increased by the elevation, and the shepherds are thus enabled to see their flocks at a much greater distance.† They cannot, however, stand perfectly still upon their stilts, without the aid of a long staff, which they always carry in their hands; this guards them against any accidental trip, and, when they wish to be at rest, forms a third leg that keeps them steady."

"I suppose," said Louisa, "that the habit of using these stilts is acquired while they are very young."

"It is, my dear: and it appears that the smaller the boy is, the higher are his stilts: a fact which affords a practical proof of the truth of what I have just stated."

"The stork is said, in my work on Natural History, to be always walking on stilts," said Louisa; "and yet it does not appear to fatigue him."

"That is very true," replied the father; "but you must remember that nature has furnished the bird with a provision, by which the legs are kept extended without any exertion of the muscles, by means of certain strings; a structure which enables it to pass whole days and nights on one foot, without the slightest fatigue. If you will visit the cook the next time she trusses a fowl, you will at once perceive the nature and utility of this structure; upon bending the legs and thighs up towards the body, you will observe that the claws close of their own accord; now, this is the position of the limbs in which the bird rests upon its perch, and in this position it sleeps in safety; for the claws do their office in keeping hold of the support, not by any voluntary exertion, but by the weight of the body drawing the strings tight."

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* Stilts also enjoyed for centuries very considerable celebrity in the city of Namur. The frequent inundations of the Meuse and Sambre, which formerly used to flood it, led, doubtless, in the first instance, to their employment; but that which was originally a necessity, became in the course of time an amusement, and one that developed singular features. As far back as the eleventh century may be traced the existence of games on stilts, which gradually assumed a party character; and the players finally resolved themselves into distinct bodies, ready at all times to do battle against each other, even to the peril of life and limb.—*Costello's Tour through the Valley of the Meuse.*

† In Scotland stilts are used to pass rivers.

"But, papa," said Tom, "I have yet some more questions to ask you on the subject of balancing. I am not at all satisfied about many of the tricks that we saw last year; indeed, I cannot believe, that many of those astonishing feats can be explained by the rules you have just given us."

"I very well know to what you allude," replied Mr Seymour. "Many singular deceptions are certainly practised by removing the centre of gravity from its natural into an artificial situation, or by disguising its place; thus, a cylinder placed upon an inclined surface may be made to run *up*, instead of *down* hill.* I can even appear to balance a pailful of water on the slender stem of a tobacco-pipe; but I shall be enabled to explain the nature of these deceptions by some toys which I have provided for your amusement, and which I must say you are fully entitled to possess, as a reward for the clear and satisfactory manner in which you have this day answered my questions. But see! here comes Mr Twaddleton: he would really seem to possess an instinct that always brings him to the Lodge whenever I am preparing some amusement for you."

The vicar smiled as he entered the room; but, unwilling to interrupt the lesson, he placed his fore-finger on his lip, and, with a significant nod, silently took a seat at the table. The children laughed aloud at this cautious demeanour; and Tom exclaimed, "Why, Mr Twaddleton, our lesson is over, and we are going to receive some new toys as a reward."

"I have here," said Mr Seymour, as he opened a large wooden box, "a collection of figures, which will always raise themselves upright, and preserve the erect position; or regain it whenever it may have been disturbed."

He then arranged these figures in battalion on the table, and striking them flat by drawing a rod over them, they immediately started up again, as soon as it was removed. "These figures," continued he, "were bought at Paris some years ago, under the title of *Prussians*."

"I declare," exclaimed the vicar, "they remind me of the rebellious spirits whom Milton represents as saying that ascent is their natural, and descent their unnatural, motion." *

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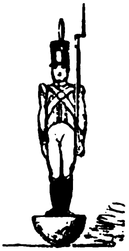
* This every schoolboy can imitate with a cricket-ball and two stumps.—ED.

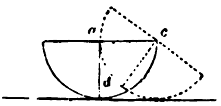
"I have seen screens similarly constructed," said Mrs Seymour, "which always rose up of themselves, upon the removal of the force that had pressed them down."

"I will explain their principle," said Mr Seymour.

"Suppose we first examine the construction of the figure," observed the vicar. "Bless me! why it is like the poet Philotus of Cos, who was so thin and light, that lead was fastened to his shoes to prevent his being blown away." †



"The figure," said Mr Seymour, "is made of the pith of the elder-tree, which is extremely light, and is affixed to the half of a leaden bullet; on account, therefore, of the disproportion between the weight of the figure and that of its base, we may exclude the consideration of the former, and confine our attention to the latter. The centre of gravity of the hemispherical base is, of course, in its axis; and, therefore, tends to approach the horizontal plane as much as possible, and this can never be accomplished until the axis becomes perpendicular to the horizon. Whenever the curved surface is in any other position, the centre of gravity is not in the lowest place to which it can descend, as may be seen by the diagram which I have just sketched. If the axis *a d* be removed to *c d*, it is evident that the centre of gravity will be raised, and that, if left alone, it would immediately descend again into its original position."



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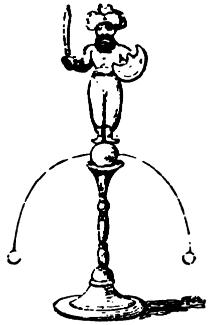
* The vicar here alludes to the speech of Moloch ("Paradise Lost," b. ii., l. 75):—

'That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat: descent and fall
To us is adverse."

† This story is related by Ælian, who at the same time discredits it, for, says he, "how could he carry about a sufficient weight to prevent his being blown away, if he were so weak as not to be able to resist the sea-breeze?" This matter-of-fact way of regarding a humorous fable is exceedingly amusing, and reminds the author of a somewhat similar criticism upon an American story which he had related. A traveller, after a long journey, anxiously looked about for some inn wherein his jaded horse might have a bait; but all in vain, no such accommodation was to be found: his next attempt was to find a grassy spot that could afford some pasturage, but in this again he failed. In this dilemma his ingenuity suggested a resource, which proves, for the thousandth and first time, the truth of the old adage, that "Necessity is the mother of Invention;" drawing from his pocket a pair of green-glass spectacles, he placed them upon the horse's face, and led him into a carpenter's yard, when the deluded animal immediately commenced his meal upon the shavings of wood and sawdust. The absurdity of this story necessarily excited a general laugh, but with one exception; it was evident that one of the company did not sympathise with his companions, and after a few minutes of apparent abstrac-

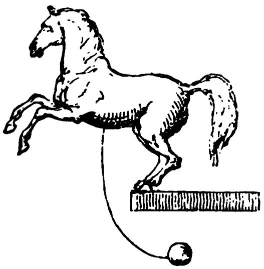
"I understand it perfectly," said Tom. "When the axis *a d* is perpendicular, the centre of gravity will be in its lowest point, or as near the earth as it can place itself; when, therefore, the figure is pressed down, the centre of gravity is raised, and, consequently, on the removal of that pressure, it will descend to its original position, and thus raise the figure."



"I see you understand it. Here, then," continued Mr Seymour, "is another toy in further illustration of our subject. It consists of a small figure, supported on a stand by a ball, which is quite loose; and yet it is made to turn and balance itself in all directions, always recovering its erect position, when the force applied to it is removed. The two weights, in this case, bring the centre of gravity considerably *below* the point of suspension or support, and therefore maintain the figure upright, and make it resume its perpendicular position, after it has been inclined to either side; for the centre of gravity cannot place itself as low as possible, without making the figure stand erect."

"That is very evident," cried Louisa.

"I shall next exhibit to you," continued Mr Seymour, "a toy that furnishes a very good solution of a popular paradox in mechanics; viz., *A body having a tendency to fall by its own weight, how to prevent it from falling, by adding to it a weight on the same side on which it tends to fall.*"



"That is indeed a paradox!" exclaimed Louisa. "The next time I see the gardener sinking under the load of a heavy sack, I shall desire him to lighten his burden by doubling its weight."

"Will you, indeed, Miss Pert? I do not think so, after you have seen the operation of the toy I am now about to exhibit. Here, you perceive, is a horse, the centre of gravity of which would be somewhere about the middle of its body; it is, therefore,

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tion, he exclaimed, with an air of much solemnity, "I must beg your pardon, sir, but I entertain strong doubts as to the truth of your story, for I cannot understand how the spectacles could have been fixed on the horse's nose." So true is the saying, that "*The prosperity of a jest lies in the ear of him who hears it.*"

very evident that, if I were to place its hinder legs on the edge of the table, the line of *direction* would fall considerably beyond the base, and the horse must be precipitated to the ground; you will, however, perceive that there is a stiff wire attached to a weight which is connected with the body of the horse, and by means of such an addition, the horse prances with perfect security at the edge of the precipice; so that the figure which was incapable of supporting itself is actually prevented from falling, by adding a weight to its unsupported end!"

The children admitted the truth of this statement, and were not immediately prepared to explain it.

"The weight, indeed, appears to be added on that side; but, in reality, it is on the opposite side," said the vicar.

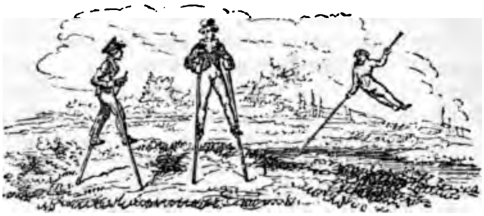
"In order to produce the desired effect," observed Mr Seymour, "the wire must be bent, so as to throw the weight far back, under the table; by which contrivance, since the centre of gravity of the whole compound figure is thrown into the leaden weight, the hind legs of the horse thus become the point of suspension, on which the ball may be made to vibrate with perfect security."

"Now I understand it," cried Tom; "instead of the weight supporting the horse, the horse supports the weight."

"Exactly so. You perceive, therefore, from these few examples, that the balancer, by availing himself of such deceptions, and combining with them a considerable degree of manual dexterity, may perform feats, which, at first sight, will appear in direct opposition to the laws of gravity. There is also another expedient of which the balancer avails himself, to increase the wonder of his performances, and that is the influence of rotatory motion, which, you will presently see, may be made to counteract the force of gravity."

"I remember that the most surprising of all the tricks I witnessed was one, in which a sword was suspended on a key, which turned round on the end of a tobacco-pipe; on the top of the sword a pewter-plate was, at the same time, made to revolve with great velocity."

"I well remember the trick to which you allude. The rotatory motion prevented the sword from falling, just as you will hereafter find the spinning of the top will preserve it in an erect position. There is also another effect produced by rotatory motion, with which it is essential that you should become acquainted. You no doubt remember that momentum, or the velocity of a body, will compensate for its want of matter. A number of bodies, therefore, although incapable of balancing each other when in a state of rest, may be made to do so by imparting to them different degrees of motion. I believe that you are now acquainted with all the principles upon which the art of balancing depends; and I have little doubt, should we again witness a performance of this kind, that you will be able to explain the tricks which formerly appeared to you so miraculous."



CHAPTER V.

EARLY on Monday morning did the young group assemble in the library: they had been told by Mrs Seymour that their father had received a new toy of a very interesting and instructive nature, and we can easily imagine the eagerness with which they anticipated the sight of it.

"I trust," said Mr Seymour, "that after our late discussion, the subject of the centre of gravity is thoroughly understood by you all. I have also reason to think that the nature and effects of what is termed *momentum* have been rendered intelligible to you."

"I certainly understand both those subjects," answered Tom: and so thought the rest of the party.

"Well, then, I will put your knowledge to the test," observed Mr Seymour, "for you shall explain to me the mechanism of these *Chinese Tumblers*." Upon which he produced an oblong box, which, by opening, formed a series of stairs or steps, and took from a drawer at its end two grotesque figures, (*Clown and Pantaloon*,) which were connected with each other by two poles, which they appeared in the attitude of carrying, pretty much in the way that the porters carry the poles of a sedan-chair. The foremost figure was then placed upon the top step, when, to the great astonishment of the whole party, the figures very deliberately descended the several stairs, each turning over the other in succession.

"There was a period in our history," observed Mrs Seymour, "when so marvellous an exhibition would have subjected the inventor to the penalties of sorcery."

"That," remarked Mr Seymour, "may be said of most of the other inventions which I have yet in store to illustrate the powers conferred upon us by a knowledge of natural philosophy; but as far as mechanical skill is concerned, I doubt whether the ancients did not even surpass us, especially in the art of constructing automata; and as quicksilver was known in the remotest ages, I think it not improbable that it was one of the agents employed by them on such occasions. If I remember right, Aristotle describes a wooden Venus, which moved by means of '*liquid silver;*' then, again, the moving tripods which Apollonius saw in the Indian temples—the walking statues at Antium, and in the temple of Hierapolis, and the wooden pigeon of Archytas,* ought, undoubtedly, to be regarded as evidences of their mechanical resources. But let us reserve these literary questions for the better judgment of our worthy friend the vicar, and proceed to consider the mechanism of the toy before us. Tom," continued he, "take the figures in your hand and examine them."

No sooner had the young philosopher received the figures from the hand of his father than he declared that the tubes were hollow, and that he felt some liquid running backwards and forwards in them.

"You are quite right, my boy," said Mr Seymour, "they contain quicksilver.'

"Now then I understand it," cried Tom; "the quicksilver runs down the tubes and alters the centre of gravity of the figures, and so makes them tumble over each other."

"Well, I acknowledge that is no bad guess as a beginning, and will certainly explain the first movement; but you will be pleased to recollect that the instant a new centre of gravity is thus produced the figures must remain at rest,—how, then, will you explain their continued motion?"

"You said something, I think, about momentum; did you not?"

"Certainly; and to its agency the continuance of the motions is to be ascribed; but I will explain the operation more fully."

Mr Seymour then proceeded to point out the mechanism and movements of the toy in a manner which we shall endeavour to convey to our readers by the aid of the annexed engraving.

"As soon as the figure A is placed upon the step D, in the position A B, the quicksilver, by running down the inclined tubes, swings the figure B round to C; and the centre of gravity having been thus adjusted, the whole would remain at rest but for the contrivance to be next described. Besides their connexion with the poles by means of pivots, the figures are connected with each other by silken strings, which keep the figure B steadily in its position, while it traverses the arc until it arrives at C, when their increased tension has the effect of capsizing it, and of thus producing a momentum, which, by carrying its centre of gravity beyond the line of direction, causes it to descend upon step E, when the quicksilver, by again flowing to the lowest part of the tubes, places the figures in the same position, only one step lower, as they were at the commencement of their action; and thus, by successive repetitions of the same changes, it is quite evident that the figures must continue to descend as long as any steps remain for their reception."

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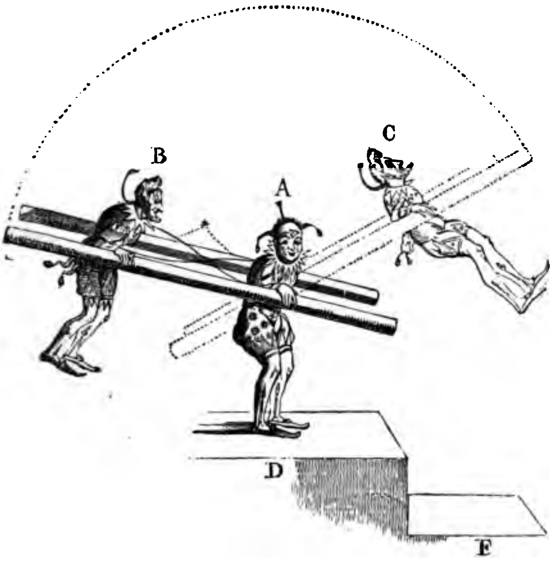
* Upon this subject, Sir David Brewster's "Introductory Letter on Natural Magic" will be read with interest and advantage. It has also been very ably investigated by M. C. Magnin, in successive numbers of *Revue des Deux Mondes.*



"I understand it perfectly," observed Louisa, with a smile of satisfaction.

"I need scarcely say," continued Mr Seymour, "that there are some niceties in the adjustment of the minuter parts of the apparatus, without which the effect could not be accomplished; the quantity of quicksilver, for instance, must bear its proper proportion to the weight and dimensions of the figure; and in order to prevent its too rapid passage along the inclined tubes, strings are stretched across their interior to retard the stream. Then, again, some management is necessary with regard to the silken strings, in order to insure a necessary degree of tension. I will now show you," said he, "a single tumbler, which will perform the same motions without the assistance of any tubes."

"But not without quicksilver," observed Tom, "which, I suppose, must, in this case, be put into the body of the figure."

"You are quite right; and it is made to pass from one extremity of its body to the other through a small orifice, which has the same effect as the strings in the tubes, in breaking the current and preventing its too rapid motion. In all other respects, the principle is the same as in the double figures."

Just as Mr Seymour had terminated his exhibition of "*Le Petit Culbuteur*," the welcome appearance of the vicar infused fresh spirits into the little party.

"My dear friend," said Mr Twaddleton, "I have been most provokingly detained by that tiresome etymologist Jeffrey Prybabel. I made many efforts to escape, but I was as a fly in a cobweb."

"At all events, I am glad to find that you have not been strangled by *Mutes*. I knew Prybabel well," observed Mr Seymour, "when he practised as a Conveyancer in Gray's Inn, and went by the nickname of the *Riot Act;* for, in such horror was he held, that, if a number of persons were congregated, his approach was sure to disperse them."

The vicar proceeded to inform Mr Seymour that he had no sooner escaped from the fangs of Prybabel than he encountered *Polyphemus*. Our readers may, perhaps, wonder who this *Polyphemus* could have been; we must, therefore, inform them that Mr Twaddleton, whose ideas were always tinctured with classical colouring, had bestowed this appellation upon the renowned Dr Doseall, the Esculapius of Overton, because, as he said, his practice was like the Cyclops, *strong but blind;* and Mr Seymour declared that the similitude was even more perfect than the vicar had contemplated, for he observed that he certainly fattened upon the unhappy victims who fell within his clutches.

With all our respect for the liberality of Mr Seymour and the kind-heartedness of the vicar, we must, in justice to this respectable son of Apollo, express our disapprobation at so unprovoked a sarcasm. We acknowledge that Dr Doseall, by the aid of low bows and high charges—of little ailments and large potions,—had contrived to secure a very comfortable balance on the creditor side of his worldly ledger. We also admit, that, after the example of other celebrated practitioners, he had one sovereign remedy, which he administered in every disease. But what of that? he was often successful in his cures—that is to say, his patients sometimes recovered *after* they had taken his physic; and is not that the test conventionally received in proof of the skill or ignorance of greater physicians than Dr Doseall? Nor can we persuade ourselves into the belief, that a doctor who faithfully adheres to one single remedy, is less likely to be right than those restless spirits who are eternally coquetting with all the preparations of the Pharmacopœia without ever remaining steady to any one of them. It has been truly remarked, that the clock which stands still and points steadfastly in one direction, is certain of being right twice in the twenty-four hours, while others may keep going continually, and as continually going wrong. Being ourselves no doctors, we merely throw out this hint for the consideration of those who are learned in such matters; but we beg pardon of our readers for this digression.

"Well," said Mr Seymour, "I am, at all events, rejoiced to see our Trojan in safety, after such perilous adventures; and I hope that he is now prepared to set sail again with us, on a new voyage of discovery. I have been engaged," continued he, "in explaining still farther the nature of momentum, and I now propose to exhibit an experiment of a different kind, in order to illustrate the same subject. You, no doubt, remember," continued Mr Seymour, "that velocity makes up for weight; and therefore, although a fluid, as air, or water, may, in a state of quiescence and equilibrium, be unable to support a body, yet, by giving it a certain velocity, it may acquire a sustaining power. I have here several gilded pith-balls, through one of which I have run two pins, at right angles to each other: the naked points, you perceive, are defended with sealing-wax, to prevent any mischief that might arise from their accidentally coming into contact with your face. By means of this brass tube (the stem of a tobacco-pipe will answer the same purpose), I shall produce a current of air by my breath, and you will observe that the little ball will continue to dance, as if unsupported."

Mr Seymour then placed the pith-ball at the end of the pipe, and, inserting its other extremity in his mouth, blew out the ball, which immediately rose in the air, and continued to float about for several seconds: he then drew in his breath, and caught it with much address on one of its points; and in this manner, alternately floating and catching it, did he continue to delight the wondering group for several minutes.

Tom received the tube and ball from the hand of his father, and soon succeeded in playing with it. Observe, gentle reader, the address with which the boy manages it.

"This reminds me of my pea-shooter," said Tom, as he removed the tube from his mouth, "with which I have often shot a pea across the playground."

"Exactly; and you will now understand the nature of the force by which your pea was projected. The air blown from the lungs gains such momentum from the contracted channel in which it flows as to impart considerable velocity to the pea placed within the influence of its current."

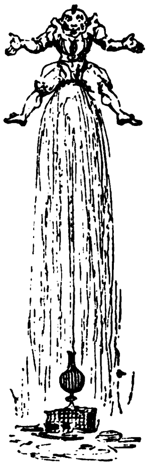
Mrs Seymour observed, that she had lately read, in Waterton's "Wanderings in South America," a very interesting account of the Indian blowpipe, which the natives of Guiana employ as an engine for projecting their poisoned arrows, and which owes its power to the principle of which Mr Seymour had just spoken, and its unerring accuracy to the skilful address of the Indian who uses it. (12.)

"Mr Seymour," said the vicar, "I much like your experiment with the pith-balls; but do tell me the use of the pins that are passed through them."

"They are not absolutely necessary for the success of the experiment; indeed, I ought to have stated, that their only use is to insure the elevation of the ball to a certain distance above the orifice of the tube, before it is set adrift."

"'*Ne turbata volent rapidis ludibria ventis*,' as Virgil has it. I duly appreciate the contrivance; but if the ball was set off at a distance from the orifice, such an expedient would be unnecessary."

"Certainly," answered Mr Seymour; "I will soon convince you that, under the condition you propose, the pins are not essential."



So saying, he placed the tube in his mouth, and by carefully holding the ball at a distance of about half an inch from its orifice, he was enabled to consign it at once to a continuous and steady stream of air, which can never be commanded at the point from which the air issues; and he thus succeeded in sustaining the ball in motion, in the same manner as he did in the preceding experiment.

"We will now proceed to the orchard," said Mr Seymour, "where I have prepared another pleasing exhibition of a similar description."

The party accordingly left the Lodge, and when they had arrived at the fountain, their father produced a small wooden figure, of which the annexed is a sketch. Within its base was fixed a hollow sphere, or ball of thin copper, which when properly adjusted on a fountain, or *jet d'eau*, was sustained by the momentum produced by the velocity of the stream; so that the whole figure was balanced, and made to dance on the fountain, as the pith-ball had been made to play in the current of air.

The children were much gratified at witnessing so curious an exhibition. Mr Twaddleton laughed heartily at the ludicrous effect it produced, and observed that, although he had never before seen the experiment, he had frequently heard of it; and he added, that he understood it to be a very common toy in Germany and Holland.*

"I have for some time," said Mrs Seymour, "been trying to construct a light figure of this kind, which shall dance on a current of air; and I believe I have at length succeeded. The head I have formed of the seed-vessel of the *Antirrhinum*, which has a striking resemblance to the traditional face of a witch, and possesses, moreover, the indispensable condition of lightness. The dress is made of silver paper, stretched over a cone of the same material. From its appearance I have named it the *Flying Witch*."

"I admire your ingenuity," said Mr Seymour, "and I have no reason to doubt the success of your enterprise."

"I found it convenient," continued Mrs Seymour, "to place a stage of card below the orifice of the tube, in order to steady the figure as she rises, and to receive her as she falls."

"Your principal care," observed her husband, "must be to throw the centre of gravity of the figure as low as possible, and which you may readily accomplish by shot suspended by silken strings from the base of the figure."

On the party returning to the library, Mr Seymour expressed a wish that, before they suspended their morning's recreations, they should take into consideration a peculiar property of matter, which they had not yet discussed.

"And what may that be?" asked Louisa.

"ELASTICITY," replied her father; "and I wish to hear whether Tom can explain to us the meaning of the term."

Tom very well knew what was meant by elasticity; but he was like many a merchant with a bill of exchange, who, although well acquainted with its value, has not sufficient small change to cash it. Tom wanted words to enable him to furnish a clear definition: his father, therefore, kindly relieved his embarrassment, by informing him that "it was a property inherent in certain bodies, by which they possessed a disposition to have their form altered by force or pressure, and to recover it on the removal of that pressure, throwing off the striking body with some degree of force: for example," continued he, "the cane which I hold in my hand can be bent to a certain extent, and then, if I let it go, it will immediately return to its former condition with considerable force."

Louisa inquired whether bending and pressing upon a body were the same thing. Mr Seymour replied, that the form of an elastic body might be altered either by compression or distension, and that

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* These toys may be seen in a shop window in the Quadrant, Regent Street. —ED.

bending was, in fact, only a combination of these two methods; "for," said he, "when a straight body, like my cane, is bent, those particles of it which are on the one side are compressed, while those on the other are distended. But let us proceed with the subject. I have said that elastic bodies, on returning to their original form, throw off the striking body with some degree of force. I have here," continued Mr Seymour, taking out of his pocket a wooden image of a cat, "a toy which I intend as a gift to John; it will serve to illustrate our subject. The tail, you perceive, is moveable, one of its ends being tied to a piece of catgut, which is a highly elastic substance. When I bend the tail under the body of the animal, I necessarily twist the string; and by pressing the other end of the wooden tail upon a piece of wax, I can retain it for a few seconds in that situation."

Mr Seymour, having fixed the tail in the manner above described, placed the wooden image on the ground, when, in a few seconds, it suddenly sprang forward, to the great delight of the younger children.

"Can you explain this action?" asked Mr Seymour.

"The wax," answered Tom, "was incapable of holding the end of the tail longer than a few seconds; and as soon as it was let loose, the elasticity of the catgut enabled it to return to its former condition; in doing which the tail struck with force against the ground, which threw off the body of the cat and produced the leap."

"Very well explained; and you, no doubt, will readily perceive that the operation of steel springs depends upon the same principle of elasticity: a piece of wire or steel, coiled up, may be made to set a machine in motion by the endeavour it makes to unbend itself. This is the principle of the spring in a watch. When our watches are what is termed *down*, this steel has uncoiled itself; and the operation of winding them up is nothing more than that of bending it again for action (13). If the elasticity of a body be *perfect*," added Mr Seymour, "it will restore itself with a force equal to that with which it was compressed. As I have given John a toy, it is but fair that I should reward you, Tom: open that box, and examine the gift which it contains."

Tom received the present from his father, and proceeded to open the lid, when, to his great astonishment, the figure of an old witch suddenly sprang upwards. Mr Seymour explained its mechanism, by stating "that the figure contained a wire coiled up like a cork-screw, and which, upon the removal of the pressure of the lid which confined it, immediately regained its original form." (14.)

Tom inquired what kind of bodies were most elastic. He was informed that air was the most elastic of all known substances, and had, for that reason, been distinguished by the name of an *elastic* fluid. Hard bodies were so in the next degree; while soft substances, which easily retain impressions, such as clay, wax, &c., might be considered as possessing but little elasticity.

"I should have thought," said Louisa, "that neither clay nor wax had possessed *any* elasticity."

"My love, we know not any bodies that are absolutely, or perfectly, either hard, soft, or elastic; since all partake of these properties, more or less, in some intermediate degree. Liquids are certainly the least elastic of all bodies; and, until lately, water was regarded as being perfectly inelastic;* but recent experiments have shown it capable of compression, and of restoring itself to its original bulk, as soon as the pressure is removed; it must, therefore, possess some elasticity. Indeed," said Mr Seymour, "we might have anticipated such a result from the effects which present themselves in the well-known game of '*Ricochet*,' or *Duck and Drake*."

"*Duck and Drake!*" exclaimed Louisa; "for goodness' sake, what can that game be?"

"I dare say your brother will not have any difficulty in explaining it to you."

Tom informed her that it was a game of *water-skimming*, in which any number of boys threw a stone, an oyster-shell, or a flat piece of tile, into the water; and that he whose stone rebounded the greatest number of times was the conqueror.

"It is a very ancient game," said Mr Seymour, "and had the vicar been present, we should have heard a learned disquisition upon it; as he, however, is unfortunately absent, I must tell you all I know upon the subject. It was called by the Greeks *Epostrakismos*,† and was anciently played with flat shells. Now it is evident that the water must, under certain conditions, possess some degree of elasticity, or the stone could not rebound (15); but I shall have occasion to revert to the subject hereafter. It is one of those games which, like the bow and arrow, brings the eye and hand in accord with each other; and these practical faculties cannot be too early called into play before they get withered by inaction."

"And are my marbles elastic?" asked Tom.

"Undoubtedly; but not to the same extent as your ball.—There," said Mr Seymour, throwing his ball against the wall, "see how it rebounds!"

"The return of the ball," observed Tom, "was, I suppose, owing to its elasticity; and I now understand why one filled with air rebounds so much better than one stuffed with bran or wool."

"You are quite right; and the return of the ball, after having struck the wall, affords an example of what is termed *reflected* motion, upon which I shall have to remark when we come to the interesting subject of 'Compound Forces;' but at present, my only wish is to render the property of elasticity intelligible to you. It is a force of very extensive application; there is scarcely a machine wherein elasticity is not essentially concerned. Nature, also, avails herself of this property to accomplish many of her purposes. Fleas, called by the Arabians, '*the father of leapers*,' and locusts, are enabled to jump two hundred times the height of their own bodies by means of a springy membrane, easily visible by a microscope; so that, supposing the same relative force to be infused into the body of a man six feet high, he would be enabled to leap three times the height of St Paul's. The hinder legs of the flea are also much longer than the fore ones: when about to leap, it bends them towards the body, and then, by suddenly extending them, effects the leap. The '*Industrious Fleas*,' lately exhibited in London, were deprived of this power by having the hinder legs amputated at the knee-joint."

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* The comparative inelasticity of water will be shown hereafter.

† Pollux, lib. ix. c 7; also in Minucius Felix, Lugd. Bat. 1652, p. 3.

"I suppose," said Tom, "that it is by some such spring shrimps are enabled to leap to the tops of cataracts, as I have read in my work on Natural History."

"Many species of fish are thus enabled to leap, by bending their bodies strongly, and then suddenly unbending them with an elastic spring; and the long-tailed cray-fish, and the common shrimp, leap by extending their tails, after they have been bent under their bodies:—but the most striking example of this kind is the leap of the salmon: just under the cataract, and against the stream, he will rush for some yards, and rise perpendicularly out of the spray twelve or fourteen feet; and, amidst the noise of the water, he may be heard striking against the rock with a sound like the clapping of hands; if he find a temporary lodgment on the shelving rock, he will lie quivering and preparing for another summerset, until he reaches the top of the cataract; thus at once exhibiting the elasticity of his bones and the power of his muscles.

"Nature also avails herself of this property for accomplishing many purposes in the vegetable kingdom; the regular dispersion and sowing of the seeds of several plants is effected by a spring, which is wound sometimes round the outside, and sometimes round the inside of the case in which the seeds are contained. (16.)

"We will now conclude our diversions," said Mr Seymour, "with an exhibition of a very striking description. Here," cried he, as he removed a small piece of apparatus from a box which stood on the table, "is a toy, at which the frigid features of Crassus might, for the second time in his life, have relaxed into a laugh, and I am equally certain that Heraclitus, of weeping memory, would have unwrinkled his brow, upon such an occasion." He then displayed a small ball of

Indian rubber, on which was painted a not very flattering resemblance of the worthy vicar, executed under the direction of Mr Seymour, by that inimitable artist, George Cruikshank. The ball was connected with an air-syringe, by which it was easily distended. It gradually increased in magnitude, swelling like the gourd of Jonah, as the inflation proceeded; and the countenance of the vicar progressively enlarged to the size of the full moon, without the least alteration in the character or expression of his features.

"I declare," said Mr Seymour, "the vicar *improves upon acquaintance.*"

"It must be acknowledged that you have *puffed* him into consequence," observed Mrs Seymour.

The countenance had, after a short time, swelled to ten times its original dimensions; the children deafened Mr Seymour with their shouts, and the good-humoured clergyman was actually convulsed with laughter. The stop-cock was now turned; the elastic bladder became smaller and smaller, and the features underwent a corresponding diminution, until they once again assumed their original dimensions.

"You perceive, my dear sir, that I make you *look small* again."

"That is by no means an unusual effect of your pleasantry," replied the vicar.

"Now, Tom," said his father, "it is for you to explain the nature of the exhibition you have just witnessed."

Tom proceeded accordingly.

"The bladder was highly elastic, and therefore readily yielded to the pressure of the air, and became distended. As soon, however, as the pressure was removed, the air was driven out again with force, and the particles of the Indian rubber returned to their former condition. But I observed one circumstance which I do not understand," said Tom; "when you first turned the stop-cock, the air rushed out with great violence, and the ball diminished very rapidly; but it gradually slackened, until, at last, the bladder could scarcely be seen to contract."

"I rejoice to find that you were so observant," said his father: "the effect you noticed depended upon a general law of elasticity. Elastic bodies, in the recovery of their forms from a state of compression, after the removal of the compressing force, exert a greater power at first than at last, so that the whole progress of restoration is a *retarded* motion."

The vicar, who had listened with profound attention to the explanation which the boy had offered, rushed forward at its conclusion, and clasping him in his arms, declared, that a first-class man of Trinity could not have succeeded better.

"But let us now, if you please, Mr Seymour, suspend our researches: recollect," said the vicar, "that your birds are, as yet, scarcely fledged; and they will, therefore, make greater advances by short flights frequently repeated, than by uninterrupted progression."

We heartily concur in this opinion, and shall, therefore, terminate the chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

As the maiden ladies of Overton were regaling themselves with a sociable dish of tea and chat, and, like many other cackling old women, discussing the mysteries of "*Table-turning*" and "*Spirit-rappings*," (17,) the conversation was abruptly interrupted by the appearance of a chariot-and-four, that passed along the road with luxurious speed, and which, as Miss Kitty Ryland declared, announced, by the dignified suavity of its roll, that the personage it conveyed must be of superior rank.

"Those," exclaimed she, "who cannot at once distinguish such 'spirit-stirring' sounds from the discordant ràttle of a plebeian chaise, deserve to wear the ears of Midas."

This extraordinary subtlety of Miss Ryland's ears is said to have been conferred upon them in her early days by those universal promoters of bodily vigour, *air* and *exercise*, of which they had received the combined advantage by the ingenious habit of listening to whispers through a certain pneumatic apparatus, familiarly termed a *key-hole*. In farther proof of the fidelity and alertness of her auditory establishment, we may just state, that, on passing Doseall's shop, she never failed to distinguish, by the sound of the mortar, whether the medicines under preparation were designed for the stomachs of the rich or the poor. The vicar even admitted the correctness of her discrimination, for he had himself observed that the pestle beat *dactyls* in one case, and *spondees* in the other.

While the carriage was passing the window, the maiden companions were breathless with wonder, each catching a glance from the countenance of her neighbour, which heightened as it were, by reflection, the surprise depicted on her own.

"Overton," exclaimed Miss Noodleton, "is doubtless by this time honoured by the arrival of some distinguished stranger; but who he is, or what may be the object of his visit, I am at a loss to divine."

"Pooh!" cried Miss Puttle; "what a fuss is here about a green carriage and four hack horses! I doubt not but that it has conveyed some visitor to the vicar: had the Seymours expected any company, I must have heard of it yesterday."

"To the vicar!" exclaimed Miss Phyllis Tapps; "and pray, Miss Puttle, allow me to ask whether you ever heard of the peacock nestling with the crow?"

"Or of the eagle taking up its abode in an ivy-bush?" vociferated Miss Ryland.

Conjectures were vain, and the "weird sisters" determined to consult their omens; prior to which, however, it was judged expedient to see and question Ralph Spindle, whom Dr Doseall employed on the arrival of a stranger, as certain insects are said to use their "*feelers*" to discover the approach of any prey that may serve them as food.

The stranger was soon discovered to be a Major Snapwell, a rich and eccentric old bachelor, who had served in various campaigns in different parts of the globe, and received a competent number of wounds in the defence of his king and country. His age was within an easy distance of sixty. His fortune was reported to be large, and it was said that he had not any near relative to enjoy the reversion, since his nephew had perished about two years before by shipwreck. The circumstances that led to this disastrous event were believed to have so affected the veteran as to have occasioned a very serious illness, and a consequent state of despondency, for which his physicians advised a constant change of scene; so that he had been rambling about the Continent during the last year and a half, accompanied only by his faithful servant Jacob Watson, who was as much attached to the Major as was ever a Newfoundland dog to his master.

Such was the information derived from Annette, the vicar's housekeeper: what proportion of fiction was mingled with its truth, the reader will probably soon be able to discover. It is, however, necessary he should be early informed that this veteran officer received his education at Harrow, and had afterwards extended his classical scholarship at Cambridge, where he was remembered as the successful candidate for the Seatonian Prize Poem.

"Well, Jacob," said the Major, as his trusty but asthmatic valet was leisurely buttoning on the long gaiters of his master the morning after his arrival, "what do you hear about this village of Overton? Are there any sociable neighbours? I like the country; it is beautiful, Jacob, and the air appears mild: it promises to be the very place to rekindle the sparks of my expiring constitution; and should you, at the same time, get your broken-winded bellows mended, my vital flame might, perhaps, burn a little brighter. But tell me, what do you hear of it, Jacob?"

"Why, and please you, Major, I just now met an old crony of mine, Mrs Annette Brown, at the Devil and the Bag of Nails——"

"And pray, Jacob," exclaimed the Major, "who taught you to speak thus irreverently of the village blacksmith?"

"The village blacksmith! Lord love you, Sir, it is the sign of the village alehouse!"

"Then it is a very odd one; but go on with your story."

"As I was saying, Major, I met an old acquaintance who is housekeeper to Mr Twaddleton, a bachelor gentleman, and the vicar of the parish. She tells me her master is downright adored in the place: though he must needs be a queer mortal, for she says he is so fond of *antics* that he won't suffer a mop or broom in his house, lest, I suppose, it should spoil the hopping of the fleas, and put an end to the fly's rope-dance upon a cobweb."

"Jacob, Jacob, you are a wag, and had better go and offer your services to this merry parson; although, I fear, your asthmatic pipes would prove but a sorry accompaniment to his capering. But psha! —fiddlesticks!—stuff and nonsense!—who ever heard of a vicar being fond of antics?—you are imposed upon, Jacob."

"I am sure that how Annette told me as much. Ay, and she said he had all sorts of *curiosities* in his parlour—such as grinning faces, dogs with three heads, rusty swords, and I do not know what besides."

"I see it!—see it all plainly!" exclaimed the Major; "and your story has so delighted me that I could almost dance myself. This respectable clergyman," thought he, "is, doubtless, an antiquary, a virtuoso—what a delightful companion will he prove! And a bachelor like myself!—what *tête-à-têtes* do I anticipate!"

"Jacob," exclaimed the Major, "you should have said that the vicar was fond of, or, to speak more correctly, devoted to *antiques*, not to *antics*. But, tell me whether there are any other agreeable persons in this village?"

"There's the squire and his family," answered the valet.

"The name, the name, Jacob?"

"Squire Seymour, and please you, Major."

"Seymour, Seymour!" repeated the Major; "I seem to know that name—let me remember—surely he was of Trinity?"

The Major's cogitations, however, were abruptly cut short by the entrance of the servant-maid, who informed him that Mr Vicar Twaddleton had called.

"I beg that Mr Twaddleton may be admitted.—Jacob, place a chair."

"Mr Twaddleton," said the Major, as he advanced towards the door to meet his visitor, "I feel obliged and honoured by your kind attention. As a perfect stranger, I could scarcely have expected this civility; but your village surrounded as it is by all the softer charms of Nature, is calculated to impress the hearts of its inhabitants with a kindred amenity. The inhabitants are, doubtless, much attached to their country."

"Proverbially so: never was Ulysses more attached to his Ithaca!"

"Nor, if I may judge from my kind reception," observed the Major, "was Telemachus more courteous to strangers!"

"We all rejoice at the arrival of visitors," continued Mr Twaddleton; "and, as vicar of the parish of Overton, I should consider myself criminally deficient in my duty were I to suffer a respectable stranger to depart from us without his having received the mark of my respect, and the tender of my humble but cordial hospitality. I am an old-fashioned person, Major Snapwell, and am well aware that these antiquated notions do not altogether accord with the cold and studied forms of the present day."

"Mr Twaddleton," exclaimed the delighted Major, "I thank thee, most heartily thank thee, in the name of all those whose hearts have not yet been benumbed by worldly indifference. Sit thee down—I abhor ceremony—and let me beg of you not to take offence at a question to which I am most anxious you should give me an answer. Are you, my dear Sir, as I have just reasons for supposing, an ANTIQUARY?"

"I am undoubtedly attached to pursuits which might have favoured such a report."

"I thought so; I guessed as much. Then give me your hand; we must be friends and associates. If there be a pursuit on earth to which I am devotedly attached, it is to that of antiquities; and, let me add," continued the Major with increasing animation, for, like bottled beer, he was the brisker for warmth, "that if there be a literary character to whom the professor of arms ought to feel superior gratitude, it is to the antiquary. How many victories, what valiant deeds must have perished in the memory of mankind, but for the kind offices of the virtuoso, under whose vivifying touch the laurels of the victor, thus rescued from the scythe of Time, have bloomed with renovated vigour; while the splendid trophies of his achievements must have been scattered as dust to the winds, had he not collected their remains, and piously deposited them in his mausoleum for their preservation!"

It were difficult to say, whether astonishment at the Major's warmth, delight at the congenial sentiments he had expressed, or admiration at the language in which they had been conveyed, was the feeling predominant in the vicar's mind, nor do we deem it necessary to inquire; suffice it to say, that, from the conversation of a few minutes, these two gentlemen felt incited to a mutual regard by sympathy and congeniality of soul; so true is it that, while we may be strangers with the companions of years, we may become friends with the strangers of yesterday!

"Major Snapwell," said the vicar, "I may truly mark this day in the diary of my life in red letters; your society will add to my happiness, by extending the sphere of my literary intercourse. When may I expect the pleasure of your company at the vicarage? I am really impatient to show you my coins and a few dainty morsels of *virtù*."

"I shall be at your service to-morrow," answered the Major; "but

I must now say something about my plans, for it is possible that you may assist me in carrying them into execution."

"Command me," said the vicar.

"For my present purpose, it is only necessary to state, that I have a nephew whom I have adopted as my son; I superintended his education; he arrived at manhood, and became an accomplished scholar and a polished gentleman. Naturally anxious to visit the ancient mistress of the world, he readily obtained my approbation of his plan. He embarked at Marseilles; but meeting with one of those treacherous gales so characteristic of the Mediterranean, he was shipwrecked in the bay of Genoa. For three years did I mourn him as dead, and it was only by a train of circumstances of the most extraordinary description, involving the plot of a rascally agent, that I at length discovered that he had escaped from the cave of some Calypso, and was in perfect health. I will not now trouble you with the details of this most singular history; suffice it to say he is well, and about to be married to a young lady for whom he has long entertained the purest attachment. I am in search of a country residence for them, and hearing that a Sir Thomas Sotherby, a resident, I understand, in your neighbourhood, is most desirous of disposing of Osterly Park, and offers many advantages to any one who will take it off his hands, and as I have both the inclination and the means to become its possessor, I have travelled hither for the purpose of inspecting it. So now you have my history."

"It is perfectly true," said the vicar, "that Sir Thomas is willing to make a considerable sacrifice in order to obtain an immediate purchaser. The health of her Ladyship is in so precarious a state that her physicians have ordered her to proceed, without delay, to Madeira. Sir Thomas, Major, is a fox-hunter, and I will venture to say that no one will miss him but the doctor and the foxes—the one will loose a profitable friend, the other a relentless enemy—'*Gaudet equis et canibus*,' as the poet has it."

"Indeed! but I am no fox-hunter, and I therefore fear that, in the opinion of the country, Osterley Park will not exchange its proprietor to advantage. Pray, vicar, may I ask whether you are addicted to field-sports?"

"Addicted to field-sports!" repeated the reverend antiquary: "I am surprised, mortified! I,—I, the Vicar of Overton, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, addicted to field-sports!"

"Nay, Mr Twaddleton," observed the Major, "I am really sorry that I should have unintentionally excited your displeasure. I am not aware that there is anything in the innocent pastime to which I have alluded inconsistent with your station and acquirements. As an antiquary, I need hardly remind you that the fathers of the Church were amongst the keenest sportsmen. Do you not remember the amusing portrait which Chaucer has given us of a sporting monastic in the 14th century, and which, by the by, was the model from which Sir Walter Scott drew the character of his Abbot in 'Ivanhoe?' Need I call to your recollection the fame of Walter, Archdeacon of Canterbury, who was promoted to the see of Rochester in 1147, and who is said to have been as keen a sportsman at eighty as he was at twenty years of age? Then, again, there was Reginald Brian, translated to the see of Worcester in 1352; and William de Clowne, whom his biographer celebrated as the most amiable ecclesiastic that ever filled the abbot's throne of St Mary in Leicestershire, the most knowing sportsman after a hare in the kingdom; insomuch, indeed, that Richard II. allowed him an annual pension for his instructions in the art. As a classical scholar, too, you must be acquainted with the many elegant treatises, both in prose and verse, which have been transmitted to us by the ancients in praise of this recreation, as, for example, those of Xenophon, Oppian, Grotius, and the younger Pliny; the latter of whom, you may remember, attributes to it his recovery from a dangerous illness."

"Major Snapwell, antiquity can no more privilege error, than novelty can prejudice truth," exclaimed the vicar, "besides which, Sir, I never could discover the principle upon which the pleasure of this said diversion of Diana can depend; and yet I do assure you, Sir, that I have not failed to submit the question to a logical examination. Thus, for instance:—the fox emits from his body certain odorous particles; —that is my *major*, and I say *concedo:* very well; I proceed. The structure of the olfactory organs of the canine species enables them to perceive this said odour: that is my *minor*, and I say again *concedo.* But I should much like to be informed how any logician can defend the consequence which is deduced from these premises. To speak syllogistically, why am I pleased to put my neck in jeopardy, *because* my dogs happen to perceive a smell?"

The Major laughed heartily at the very ludicrous point of view in which the worthy vicar had thought proper to represent the subject, observing that ridicule was the usual resort of those who were beaten in argument; and he reminded him that Aristophanes was thus enable to put down even Socrates,* and that Cervantes, by his Don Quixote, succeeded in suppressing that extravagant passion for chivalrous romances in the 17th century, which had resisted every stern appeal to reason. Their discourse now took a different turn. The Major inquired what might be the origin of the singular sign of the village inn—"*The Devil and the Bag of Nails?*" "Satan," continued the Major, "is unquestionably the patron of the public-house; but why he should be represented as holding in his hand a bag of nails, I cannot divine, unless, indeed, in reference to the old adage, that '*Every glass of spirit is a nail in your coffin.*'"

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* "The Clouds:" see the dialogue between Strepsiades and Socrates.

"Ha! ha! ha! whimsical enough," cried the vicar; "but, unfortunately, your explanation is not the true one. The sign," observed Mr Twaddleton, "is not quite so uncommon as you seem to suppose; it was originally '*Pan and his Bacchanals*,' but, by a very natural transition, the figure of the sylvan deity, which is certainly terrific * enough to sanction the mistake, has passed into that of the evil tempter; while the word *Bacchanals*, by one of those verbal corruptions so common in all languages, has been converted into the *Bag of nails*."

"Very true," said the Major; "whenever the vulgar are incapable of understanding the meaning of a word, they are sure to substitute for it some one which has the nearest resemblance to it in sound, and which is more familiar to them. I had but just now an excellent instance of this kind: my blundering servant Jacob insisted upon it you were fond of *antics;* and before I left London, on sending him out to purchase a *Court Calendar*, what do you suppose he brought home?—a *quart colander!*"

The vicar was much amused by the absurdity of the mistake, and took occasion to observe that the Greeks had the same unfortunate turn of reducing every unknown term to some word with which they were better acquainted, and which, according to Jacob Bryant, had produced the greatest confusion in ancient mythology.

"I lately heard," continued the Major, "of a Welsh squire who, upon being questioned whether *Socinianism* or *Arianism* prevailed in his district, replied that he could not answer that question, but that he knew there had been a great deal of *Rheumatism*."

"As we are upon this subject," said the vicar, "I must give you an instance of verbal corruption, which my friend and neighbour, Jeremy Prybabel, the etymologist, has discovered. Over the entrance of an inn at Hounslow are suspended the arms of the City companies, with the motto '*God encompasses us*,' which has given to the inn the name of the '*Goat and Compasses!*'"

"A similar explanation will apply to the sign of the '*Goat in Boots*,' which," said the Major, "is evidently a corruption of the Dutch legend, '*Mercurius der Goden Boode*.'

"Many such absurd corruptions might be enumerated," continued the Major, "but I know not one more amusing than the sign of the '*Swan with two necks*.'"†

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* To the terror-inspiring power of Pan we owe the word "*Panic*." The classical reader will remember that, at the battle of Marathon, *Pan* is said to have appeared, like Theseus, on the side of the Greeks, smiting the Persians with that irresistible fear—a *Panic;* in gratitude for which the worship of Pan was introduced at Athens.

† The two necks of the *Spread Eagle* in the Imperial Arms of Russia have a different signification, being symbolical of the East and West Empire, and the extension of their power from East to West.

"You may indeed say so," observed the vicar; "it is one of the best illustrations of a colloquial corruption that I am acquainted with. The swans on the river are marked on the upper mandible to denote their several owners: two *nicks* upon this part invest the Vintner's Company with the ownership of the birds so marked.*

"I have but lately discovered the true interpretation of the '*Green-man and Still*:' it denoted," continued Mr Twaddleton, "the vendor of cordial waters; the *Green-man* was the person who furnished the herbs, and the *Still* signified the process by which their essence was extracted."

But the good company of the Major and his newly-acquired friend must not detain us any longer from our duty. Mr Seymour and his young family have re-assembled in the library, and it is necessary that we should immediately join them. Some of our readers may, perhaps, decline accompanying us upon this occasion; for the subject to be discussed, however necessary it may be, is certainly not so entertaining as many of those which have engaged our attention. If this be the case, they may make a short cut, and join us again at the beginning of the following chapter. The children had arranged themselves around the table, when their father observed, that it would be necessary, for their future progress, to devote an hour or two to the consideration of several mathematical figures and terms.

"As to mathematical figures," said Tom, "if you allude to squares, circles, and figures of that description, and to parallel lines, angles, and so on, I can assure you that I am already well acquainted with them; for the work you have given us on PAPYRO-PLASTICS† has fully instructed me in those particulars."

"If that be the case," replied Mr Seymour, "you will not have any difficulty in answering my questions; but we must, nevertheless, go regularly through the subject, for the sake of your sisters, who may not be equally proficient in this elementary part of geometry: tell me, therefore, in the first place, what is meant by a *parallelogram*."

"A four-sided figure," answered Tom.

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* To these examples the author will take the liberty of adding another—viz., that of the sign of "*The Pig and Whistle*," which is a corruption of "*Peg and Wassail*." In the Wassail-bowl the liquor was divided into equal quantities by pegs, placed one above the other, in order to make men drink fairly; and hence we derive the saying of a person being "*a peg too low*." So, again, the saying of "*Please the Pigs*," is perfectly unintelligible until we wave the wand of our Etymologist, when, "*Hey, Presto!*" the pigs are at once transformed into *Pyx*, the sacred box, in which the Host was kept; and thus is an obscure exclamation changed into an intelligible adjuration.

† "PAPYRO-PLASTICS; or, The Art of Modelling in Paper;" from the German, by Boileau, London, 1825. The Author strongly recommends this interesting little work, as opening a new source of instructive amusement. His own children have derived from it many hours of rational recreation.

"That is true; but are there not some other conditions annexed to it?"

"Yes; its opposite sides are parallel."

"And what do you understand by the term *parallel?*"

"Lines are said to be parallel," said Tom, "when they are always at the same distance from each other, and which, therefore, can never meet, though ever so far continued."

"You are quite right. What is a *square?*"

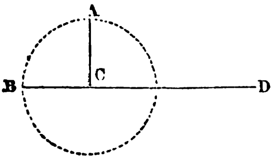
"A four-sided figure, in which the sides are all equal, and its angles all right angles."

"Good again: but let me see whether you have a correct notion of the nature of an angle."

"An angle is the opening formed by two lines meeting in a point."

Mr Seymour here acknowledged himself perfectly satisfied with his son's answers, and said, that he should, accordingly, direct his attention more particularly to Louisa and Fanny; and, taking his pencil, he sketched the annexed figure.

"You perceive, Louisa," said her father, "that the line A C makes two angles with the line B D—viz., the angle A C D and the angle A C B; and you perceive that these two angles are equal to each other."



"How can they be equal?" cried Fanny, "for the lines are of very different lengths."

"An angle, my dear girl, is not measured by the *length* of the lines, but by their *opening.*"

"But surely," said Louisa, "that amounts to the same thing: for the longer the lines are, the greater must be the opening between them."

"Take the pair of compasses," replied her father, "and describe a circle around these angles, making the angular point C its centre."

"To what extent am I to open them?"

"That is quite immaterial; you may draw your circle of any magnitude you please, provided it cuts both the lines of the angles we are about to measure. All circles of whatever dimensions, are supposed to be divided into 360 parts, called *degrees;* the size, but not the number, of such degrees will therefore increase with the magnitude of the circle. And since the opening of an angle is necessarily a portion of a circle, it must embrace a certain number of degrees; and two angles are, accordingly, said to be equal, when they contain an equal number of them."

"Now I understand it," said Louisa: "as the dimensions of an angle depend upon the number of degrees contained between its lines, it evidently must be the *opening*, and not the *length* of the lines, that determines the measure of the angle."

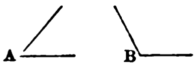
"Say, rather, the *value* of the angle, for that is the usual expression: but I perceive you understand me; tell me, therefore, how many degrees are contained in each of the two angles formed by one line falling perpendicularly on another, as in the above figure."

"I perceive that the two angles together are just equal to half the circle; and since you say the whole circle is divided into 360 degrees, each angle must measure 90 of them, or the two together make up 180."

"You are quite right, and I beg you to remember that an angle of 90 degrees is called a *right* angle, and that, when one line is perpendicular to another, it will always form, as you have just seen, a right angle on either side."

"I now understand," said Louisa, "what is meant by lines being at *right angles to each other*. But, papa," continued she, "what are *obtuse* and *acute* angles, of which I have so often heard you speak ?"

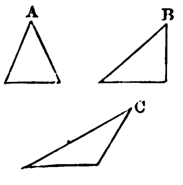
Mr Seymour replied, that he could better explain their nature by a drawing, than by any verbal description. "Here," said he, "is an acute angle, A; and here an obtuse one, B; the former, you perceive, is one that contains less than 90 degrees: the latter, one which contains more, and is consequently greater than a right angle."



Louisa fully comprehended the explanation, and observed that she should remember, whenever an angle measured less than a *right* angle, that it was *acute*, and when more, *obtuse*. "But you have not yet explained to me," she continued, "the meaning of a *triangle*."

"That is a term denoting a figure of three sides and angles. I dare say Tom can describe the several kinds of triangles."

Tom accordingly took the pencil, and drew a set of figures, of which the annexed are faithful copies.



"A," said he, "is an *Equi-lateral* triangle; its three sides being all equal. B is a *Right-angled* triangle, having one right angle. C represents an *Obtuse-angled* triangle, it having one obtuse angle. An *Acute-angled* triangle is one in which all the three angles are acute, as represented in figure A."

"As you have succeeded so well in your explanation of a triangle, let us see whether you can describe the nature of a circle."

"It is a round line, every part of which is equally distant from the centre."

"And which round line," said Mr Seymour, "is frequently called the *circumference*. What is the diameter ?"

"A straight line drawn through the centre, and terminating in the circumference on both sides."

"And an arc?" said Mr Seymour.

"Any portion of the circumference."

"Now let me ask you, what name is given to a line which joins any two opposite angles of a four-sided figure?"

"The *diagonal*," promptly answered the boy.

"You are quite right," said Mr Seymour; and, turning towards the girls, he desired them to remember that term, as they would frequently hear it mentioned during their investigation into the nature of "Compound Forces." "I really think," continued their father, "that Tom is as capable of instructing you in these elementary principles as myself; I shall, therefore, desire you, my dear boy, to conclude this lecture during my absence; remember, that by teaching others we always instruct ourselves: but before I quit you, I will give you a riddle to solve, for I well know that you all delight in an enigma."

"Indeed do we," said Louisa.

"Pray let us hear it, papa," cried Fanny.

Mr Seymour then recited the following lines, which he had hastily composed; the point having, no doubt, been suggested on the instant by the remark he had just offered:—

"Here's a riddle for those who delight in their gold,
Which they p'rhaps may explain, when my story is told;
No treasure's so precious, and yet those who gain me,
Though they give me away, will always retain me!
Indeed, if they wish to increase their rich store,
By giving away they will only add more!
To Fancy's quick eye, in what forms have I risen!
And Poets declare that my birth was in heaven;
To some as a flame, as a stream, or a fountain,
To others I seem as a tower or mountain.
Should these hints not betray me, I only can say,
You do not possess me—I hope that you may."

"Why," cried Tom, "what can that be, of which the more we give away, the more we have left?"

"Ay," added Louisa, "and that we actually *increase* the store, by *giving away* a part of it!"

"It is some word, I think," observed Fanny; "do you not remember that mamma asked us what that was, from which we might take away *some*, and yet that the *whole* would remain?"

"To be sure," cried Tom, "I remember it well; it was the word *wholesome*."

Mr Seymour here assured them, that the enigma they had just heard did not depend upon any verbal quibble: and that as the object of its introduction was to instruct, rather than to puzzle them, he would explain it, and leave them to extract its moral, and profit by its application.

"It is KNOWLEDGE," said he.

"'*No treasure's so precious*,'" repeated Louisa; "certainly none; —'*and yet those who gain me, though they give me away, will always retain me;*'—to be sure," added she. "How could I have been so simple as not to have guessed it? We can certainly impart all the knowledge we possess, and yet not lose any of it ourselves."

"By instructing others," said Mr Seymour, "we are certain, at the same time, of instructing ourselves, and thus to increase our store of knowledge. Let this truth be impressed upon your memory, and after our conversations, examine each other as to the knowledge you have gained by them; you will thus not only fix the facts more strongly in your recollection, but you will acquire a facility of conversing in philosophical language. I hope you have not forgotten how forcibly your good friend the vicar urged the importance of avoiding the use of words that did not, at once, enforce their meaning; he told you that philosophical language was purposely invented to embody, by the fewest possible words, the highest amount of ideas; and with his usual love of classical illustration, he likened them to that '*meaning-crowded*' word, which Andromache so deeply grieved at not having heard from the lips of the dying Hector.* It is undoubtedly well known that the misuse of a word has even led to a false theory in science; if you ask me for an example, I will remind you of our late discourse regarding the term '*Vis Inertiæ*.'† It is possible that this conviction of the vicar's mind, may have originally led him to that extravagant abhorrence of puns which so distinguishes him."

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* πυκὶνον ἔπος, Iliad. lib. 22.

† Page 46.

CHAPTER VII.

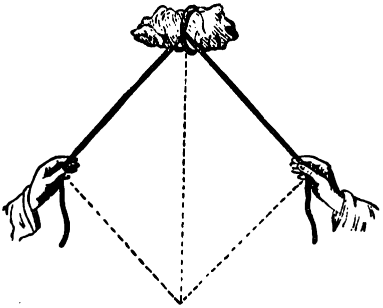
ON the following morning Mr Seymour proceeded to explain the nature of "COMPOUND FORCES." The young party having assembled as usual, their father commenced his lecture by reminding them that the motion of a body actuated by a *single* force was always in a right line, and in the direction in which it received the impulse.

"Do you mean to say, papa, that a single force can never make a body move round, or in a crooked direction; if so, how is it that my ball or marble will frequently run along the ground in a curved direction? indeed, I always find it very difficult to make it go straight."

"Depend upon it, my dear, whenever the direction of a moving body deviates from a straight line, it has been influenced by some second force."

"Then I suppose that, whenever my marble runs in a curved line, there must be some second force to make it do so."

"Undoubtedly; the inequality of the ground may give it a new direction; which, when combined with the original force which it received from your hand, will fully explain the irregularity of its course. It is to the consideration of such compound motion that I am now desirous of directing your attention: the subject is termed the 'COMPOSITION OF FORCES.' Here is a block of wood, with two strings, as you may perceive, affixed to it; do you take hold of one of these strings, Louisa; and you, Tom, of the other. That is right. Now place the block at one of the corners or *angles* of the table: and while



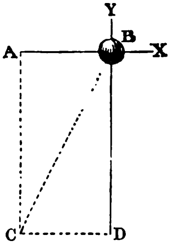
Tom draws it along one of its sides, do you, Louisa, at the same time draw it along the other."

The children obeyed their father's directions.

"See!" said Mr Seymour, "the block obeys neither of the strings, but picks out for itself a path which is intermediate. Can you tell me, Tom, the exact direction which it takes?"

"If we consider this table as a parallelogram, I should say that the block described the diagonal."

"Well said, my boy; the ablest mathematician could not have given a more correct answer. The block was actuated by two forces at the same time; and, since it could not move in two directions at once, it moved under the *compound* force, in a mean or diagonal direction, proportioned to the influence of the joint forces acting upon it. You will, therefore, be pleased to remember, it is a general law, that where a body is actuated by two forces at the same time, whose directions are inclined to each other, at any angle whatever, it will not obey either of them, but move along the diagonal. In determining, therefore, the course which a body will describe under the influence of two such forces, we have nothing more to do than to draw lines which show the direction and quantity of the two forces, and then to complete the parallelogram by parallel lines, and its diagonal will be the path of the body. I have here a diagram which may render the subject more intelligible. Suppose the ball B were, at the same moment, struck by two forces, X and Y, in the directions B A and B D. It is evident that the ball would not obey either of such forces, but would move along the oblique or diagonal line B C."



"But," said Tom, "why have you drawn the line B D so much longer than B A?"

"I am glad that you have asked that question. Lines are intended, not only to represent the direction, but the *momenta* or quantities of the forces: the line B D is, as you observe, twice as long as B A; it consequently denotes that the force Y, acting in the direction B D, is twice as great as the force X, acting in the direction B A. Having learned the direction which the body will take when influenced by joint forces of this kind, can you tell me the relative time which it would require for the performance of its diagonal journey?"

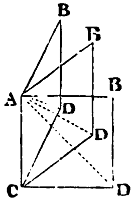
Tom hesitated; and Mr Seymour relieved his embarrassment by informing him, that it would pass along the diagonal in exactly the same space of time that it would have required to traverse either of the sides of the parallelogram, had but one force been applied. Thus, the ball B would reach C in the same time that the force X would have sent it to A, or the force Y to D. "I will endeavour to prove this fact beyond all doubt. It is, I think, evident, that the force which acts in the direction B A can neither accelerate nor retard the approach of the body to the line D C, which is parallel to it; hence it will arrive at C in the same time that it would have done had no motion been communicated to it in the direction B A. In like manner, the motion in the direction B D can neither make the body approach to nor recede from A C; and it therefore follows, that, in consequence of the two motions, the body will be found both in A C and C D, and will therefore be found in C, the point of intersection."

Louisa seemed to express by her looks the irksomeness of such demonstrations; and which did not pass unobserved.

"This may appear tedious and uninteresting," said Mr Seymour, "but the information is absolutely essential to our future progress, for there is scarcely a toy or game that can be thoroughly understood without it: if you would reap you must sow."

Tom and Louisa both expressed themselves willing to receive whatever instruction their father might consider necessary; and they farther declared, that they understood the demonstration he had just offered them.

"Is it not, then, evident," proceeded Mr Seymour, "that the composition of forces must always be attended with loss of power; since the diagonal of a parallelogram can never, under any circumstances, be equal to two of its sides? and is it not also evident, that the length of the diagonal must diminish as the angles of the sides increase; so that the more acute the angle at which the forces act, the less must be the loss by composition? But I shall be better able to explain this law by a diagram. If B A, A C be the sides of a parallelogram representing the direction of two forces, and A D the diagonal path of the body, is it not evident that the line A D will shorten as the angle B A C increases?"

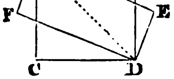


"We see that at once," cried Tom, "from the diagram before us."

"Then we will proceed to another fact connected with the same subject. Look at this diagram; is not the diagonal A D common to both the parallelograms inscribed about it, viz., of A B C D, and A E F D?"

"To be sure it is."

"Then it is equally clear that a body may be made to traverse the same path A D, by any pair of forces represented by the adjacent sides of either of such parallelograms."



"Undoubtedly."

"I request you to keep that fact in your recollection."

"I have now to inform you," continued he, "that a single force may be resolved into any number of forces, and may, in fact, be regarded as compounded of innumerable oblique ones. In order, however, to render this fact more intelligible, I must refer you to the same figure, from which it will appear that the motion of a body, along the line A D, will be the same whether it arise from one single force acting in that direction, or from two forces impressed upon it in the directions A B, A C, or in those of A E, A F; and, consequently, although the motion may, in reality, be the effect of a single force, yet it may be considered as compounded of two or more in other directions, since the very same motion would arise from such a composition."

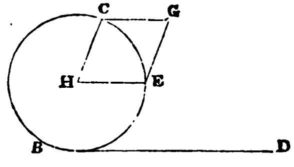
Tom acknowledged the truth of this statement; and Mr Seymour assured him, that, when they came to play at ball and marbles, he should be able to give him a practical demonstration of the fact; for he would show him, that whenever a body strikes a surface obliquely, or in an inclined direction, such a *resolution of force* will actually take place: "and now, Tom," said his father, "give me a marble; for I wish to explain the reason why it turns round, or revolves on its axis, as it proceeds forward."

"I suppose," said Tom, "it depends upon the action which I give to it by my thumb and finger when I shoot it out of my hand."

"You are undoubtedly capable of thus giving to your marble a certain *spinning* motion, the effect of which we shall have to consider hereafter; but I fancy you would be greatly puzzled to make it proceed without revolving, give it what impulse you might by your hand."

"I have sometimes tried," said Tom, "to make it do so by pushing it along with a flat ruler, but it always *rolled* in spite of me."

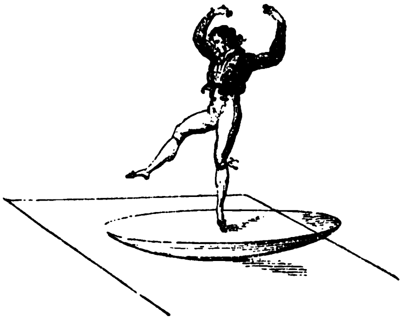
"Then it is clear, from your own experiment, that its rotation cannot arise from the cause you would assign to it. If you will attend to this diagram," continued his father, "I will endeavour to explain the operation. It is evident that, as the marble moves along the ground B D, the motion of the point B will be retarded by the resistance occasioned by its rubbing on the ground; while the point C, which does not meet with any such resistance, is carried forward without opposition, and it consequently tends to move faster than the point B; but since all the parts of the marble cohere or stick together, the point C cannot move faster than B, and, therefore, the marble revolves from C to E; and as the several points of the marble which are successively applied to the floor are retarded in their motion,



while the opposite points move freely, the marble during its progressive motion must continue to revolve."

"But you said, papa, that whenever a body moved in any direction, except that of a straight line, it must have been acted upon by more than one force; and yet the marble not only runs along the ground, but turns round, at the same time, by the simple force of my hand."

"The revolution of the marble, my dear boy, is brought about by no less than three forces; look attentively at the diagram, and you will easily comprehend my explanation. There is, in the first place, the rectilinear motion given to it by your hand; then there is the friction of the ground: since, however, this latter acts in a contrary direction, it merely tends to lessen or counteract the velocity with which the under-surface proceeds, and consequently to give a relatively-increased progressive motion to its upper part; then comes that force by which its several parts cohere, and which may be represented by C H: so that the two forces producing the revolution of the point C are justly expressed by the lines C G, C H; but these are in the direction of the two sides of a parallelogram, the point will therefore move along the diagonal C E. I have here a toy for you, which will serve to explain still further the causes of rotation to which I have alluded." Mr Seymour produced a watch-glass, in the hollow of which stood a dancing-figure of thin card, as represented in the engraving.



He placed it upon a black japanned waiter,* which he held in an inclined position, when it immediately slid down the inclined plane, as might have been expected. He next let fall a drop of water upon the waiter, and placed the watch-glass in it. Under this new arrangement, instead of sliding, the watch-glass began to revolve as soon as an inclination was given to the surface; and it continued to revolve with an accelerated velocity, obeying the inclination and position of the plane, as directed by the hand of the operator.

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* A common plate will answer the purpose; but the black surface gives the advantage of exhibiting more perfectly the motion of the water during the progress of the experiment.

"What a very pretty effect is produced by the rapid revolution of the figure!" observed Louisa.

"Its use in the arrangement," said her father, "is to render the accelerated motion more obvious."

"I perceive it revolves faster and faster, or I suppose I ought to say, with an accelerated velocity," said Tom.

"Certainly," answered Mr Seymour; "whenever a force continues to act, the motion produced by it must be accelerated for the reason already given you*—but let me explain the operation of the drop of water, which, as you have just seen, converted the sliding into the revolving motion. In the first place, in consequence of the cohesion of the water to the two surfaces, a new force was introduced, by which an unequal degree of resistance was imparted to different portions of that part of the watch-glass in contact with the plane, and, consequently, in its effort to slide down, it necessarily revolved. Now, if you will attentively observe the change of figure which the drop of water undergoes during the revolution of the glass, you will perceive a species of vortex; a film of water, by capillary action, is drawn to the foremost portion of the glass, while, by the centrifugal force, a body of water is thrown under the hinder part of it; the effect of both these actions is to accelerate the rotatory motion.

"I shall now dismiss the subject for the present, but on some future occasion I shall probably revert to it; for it may be made to afford a simple illustration of the rotatory and progressive motions of the earth round the sun; and it may also give us the means of producing some optical effects of a very curious kind." (18.)

Mrs Seymour here suggested that, as it was past one o'clock, the children should be dismissed to their more active sports in the garden.

"We will instantly proceed to the lawn," replied Mr Seymour, "and Tom may try his skill with the *sling;* an amusement which I have provided as a reward for his industry, and which will, at the same time, convey some farther information concerning the nature of those forces we have just been considering. The sling," continued his father, as he advanced upon the lawn, "consists, as you perceive, of a leathern thong, broadest in the middle, and tapering off gradually towards both ends. To each extremity is affixed a piece of string. I shall now place a stone in the broad part of the leather, and introduce my middle finger into the loop formed in one of the strings, and hold the other extremity between my fore-finger and thumb."

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* See page 42.

He then whirled it round, and when it had gained sufficient impetus, he let go his hold of the string, and the stone instantly shot forth with amazing velocity.

"See! see! there it goes," exclaimed Tom; "to what a height it ascended!"

"And to what a distance has it been thrown!" observed Louisa, who had attentively watched its progress and descent.

"Now, Tom," said his father, "can you explain the operation you have just witnessed?"

"Not exactly, papa."

"Then attend to me. Have you not learned that circular motion is always the result of two forces?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Tom; "of one force which attracts it to the centre around which it moves, and of another which drives it off in a right line."

"Certainly; the former of these forces is therefore termed the *centripetal*, because it draws the body towards the centre, while the latter is called the *centrifugal* force, since its influence disposes the body to fly off from the centre. In circular motion, these two forces constantly balance each other; otherwise it is evident that the revolving body must either approach the centre or recede from it, according as the one or the other prevailed. When I whirled round the sling, I imparted a projectile force to the stone, but it was prevented from flying off in consequence of the counteracting or *centripetal* force of the string; but the moment I let go my hold of this, the stone flew off in a right line; having been released from confinement to the fixed or central point, it was acted upon by one force only, and motion produced by a single force is, as you have just stated, always in a right line."

"But," observed Louisa, "the stone did not proceed in a straight, but in a curved line; I watched its direction from the moment it left the sling till it fell to the ground."

"You are perfectly correct," replied Mr Seymour, "it described a curve, which is called a *parabola;* but that was owing to the influence of a new force which came into play, viz., that of gravity, the effect of which I shall have to explain hereafter."

"I cannot understand," said Tom, "why the stone should not have fallen out of the sling when you whirled it round over your head."

"Because, my dear, it was acted upon by the *centrifugal* force, which counteracted that of gravity; but I will render this fact more evident, by a very simple and beautiful experiment. I have here a wine-glass, around the rim of which I shall attach a piece of string so as to enable me to whirl it round. I will now fill it with water, and although during one part of its revolution it will be actually inverted, you will find that I shall not spill a single drop of water."

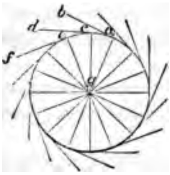
Mr Seymour then whirled round the glass, and the young party were delighted with the confirmation thus afforded to their father's statement.

"I see," said Tom, "how it happened; when the glass was inverted the water could not fall out, because it was influenced by the centrifugal force which opposed gravity."*

"Exactly. Have you ever observed what happens during the trundling of a mop? The threads which compose it fly off from the centre, but being confined to it at one end they cannot part from it; while the water which they contain, being unconfined, is thrown off in right lines."

"I have certainly observed what you state," said Louisa; "the water flies off in all directions from the mop."

"Yes," added Tom, "the water was not acted upon by the *centripetal* force as the threads were, and consequently there was nothing to check the *centrifugal* force, which carried the water off in a straight line from the centre."



"Your are not quite correct," said Mr Seymour; "the water does not fly off in a right line from the centre, but in a right line in the direction in which it was moving at the instant of its release: the line which a body will always describe under such circumstances is called a *tangent*, because it *touches* the circumference of the circle, and forms a right angle with a line drawn from that point of the circumference to the centre: but I will render this subject more intelligible by a diagram. Suppose a body, revolving in the circle, was liberated at *a*, it would fly off in the direction *a b;* if at *c*, in that of *c d;* and if at *e*, in that of *e f;* and so on. Now if you draw lines from these several points to the centre of the circle, you will perceive that such lines will form, in each case, a right angle. In the experiment which you have just witnessed, the surface of the water must have formed, during its revolution, a right angle with the string, and consequently could not have fallen out of the wine glass. A knowledge of this law," continued Mr Seymour, "will explain many appearances which, although familiar, I dare say, have never been understood by you. You may remember accompanying me to the pottery, to see the operation of the turning-lathe; it was owing to the centrifugal force produced by the rotation of the wheel, that the clay, under gentle pressure swelled out so regularly; from a similar cause, the flour is thrown out of the revolving mill as fast as it is ground; and shall presently show you that you are indebted to this same force for the spinning of your top and the trundling of your hoop. But let us quit this subject for the present, and pursue the stone and its course after it is liberated from the sling. Louisa has justly observed that it described a curve; can you explain why it should deviate from a straight line?"

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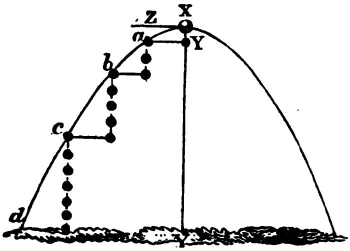
* A more striking but fearful exemplification of this principle has been lately exhibited in London under the name of the CENTRIFUGAL RAILWAY, in which a car containing a passenger is made to descend from a lofty ceiling down an inclined railway, when, after whirling round in an inverted position, it is carried forward to a corresponding elevation. We would, however, warn our young friends against an experimental trip, unless, perchance, like the swan in Lad Lane, they have a neck to spare.

"Let me see," said Tom, thoughtfully; "it would be acted upon by two forces, one carrying it forward in a right line, the other bringing it to the earth; it would, therefore, not obey either, but describe a diagonal; but why that diagonal should be a curve I cannot exactly explain."

"Then I will give you the reason," said his father. "A stone projected into the air is acted upon by no less than three forces: the force of projection, which is communicated to it by the hand or the sling; the resistance of the air through which it passes, and which diminishes its velocity without changing its direction; and the force of gravity, which ultimately brings it to the ground. Now, since the power of gravity and the resistance of the air will always be greater than any force of projection we can give a body, the latter must be gradually overcome, and the body brought to the ground; but the stronger the projectile force, the longer will those powers be in subduing it, and the farther will the body go before it falls. A shot fired from a cannon, for instance, will go much farther than a stone thrown from your hand. Had the two forces which acted upon the stone—viz., those of projection and gravity, both produced uniform motion, the body must certainly have descended through the diagonal; but since gravity, as you have already learned, is an accelerating force, the body is made to describe a curve instead of a straight line. This law, however, will require the aid of a diagram for its explanation. Let x represent the ball at its greatest altitude; x y, the force of gravity drawing it downward; and x z, that of projection. We have here, then, two forces acting in the direction of the two sides of a parallelogram. In passing on to z, the ball will perform the diagonal, x *a;* and in the next equal space of time, will descend through *three* times the distance z *a*, and will consequently be found at *b;* while in the next period it will fall through *five* equal spaces, and pass to *c;* and



in the next period, again, as it must fall through *seven* such spaces, it will reach the ground at *d*, having described the portion of a curve from x to *d*, or during the time that the two forces were in simultaneous operation. The same principle will explain the curved ascent of the ball, substituting only the laws of retarded for those of accelerated motion; for it is clear, that the body during its *ascent* will be retarded in the same degree in which it was accelerated during its *descent*."

"Your explanation," said Louisa, "appears very clear and satisfactory."

"The curve which *Projectiles* (that is to say, bodies projected into the air) describe is termed a *Parabola* (19), although the resistance of the air, which is not recognised in the theory, produces a considerable influence on the practical result.

"I have only to add," said Mr Seymour, "that although there exists an immense distance between a stone fastened to a cord, which a boy swings round, and those celestial bodies that revolve to all eternity, yet science proves that the source of their motions is identical."

The children now proceeded to amuse themselves with the sling. Louisa challenged Tom to a trial of skill. She fancied that she could hurl a stone with greater accuracy than her brother; but after several contests she acknowledged herself vanquished, for Tom had succeeded in striking the trunk of an old tree a considerable distance, while his sister was never able to throw the stone within several yards of the mark.

"Well done, Tom!" exclaimed Mr Seymour; "why, you will soon equal in skill the ancient natives of the Balearic Islands!"

"And were they famous for this art?" asked Louisa.

"With such dexterity," replied her father, "did they use the sling, that we are told their young children were not allowed any food by their mothers, except that which they could fling down from the beam where it was placed aloft. I fancy, however, Tom, that you would become very hungry before you could strike an object in yonder poplar."

"At all events, I will try," said Tom.

He accordingly whirled round his sling, and discharged its stone, which flew forward with great velocity, but in a direction very wide from the mark at which it was aimed. In the next moment a violent hallooing was heard: it was from the vicar, who had narrowly escaped the boisterous salutation of the falling stone, which in its anxiety to throw itself at the feet of the reverend gentleman, struck the beaver pent-house that defended his upper story, and, by a resolution of forces, which we have endeavoured to explain, darted off in the direction of the side of a parallelogram, and was thus averted from the equally-sensitive antipodes of his venerable person—his brains and corns.

"Upon my word, young gentleman!" cried the vicar, "I expected nothing less than the fate of the giant of Gath."

"My dear Mr Twaddleton," exclaimed Tom, in a tone of alarm, "I sincerely hope that you have not been struck?"

"Oh, no! like the Volscians of old, I bear my shield upon my head;* so, thanks to my clerical hat, I have escaped the danger which threatened me: but, tell me, what new game is engaging your attention?"

Mr Seymour said that he had been explaining the scientific principle of the sling, and that he hoped the vicar was prepared to afford them some information respecting its invention and history.

"The sling?" repeated the vicar; "why, bless me! I left you discoursing upon elasticity; you really stride over province after province as rapidly as if you were gifted with the seven-leagued boots of the Ogre: but to the point in question. The art of slinging, or casting stones is one of the highest antiquity, and was carried to a great degree of perfection amongst the Asiatic nations. It was well known and practised at a very early period in Europe; and our Saxon ancestors appear to have been very expert in the use of this missile."

Mr Twaddleton, being desirous of communicating the history of Major Snapwell, begged that Mr and Mrs Seymour would allow him a few minutes' conversation; observing that the attention of the children would be agreeably occupied during their absence by their newly-acquired amusement.

"We will then, if you please, vicar," replied Mr Seymour, "walk to the Geological Temple, where I have lately deposited some specimens which you have not yet seen."

"To speak sincerely," said the vicar, "I cannot participate in that high satisfaction which you appear to feel in collecting such hoards of broken rocks and pebbles: where can lie the utility of such labour? unless, indeed, in pursuance of your Utopian plans, you intend to *Macadamise* all the roads of science."

"Is it nothing, my dear Mr Twaddleton, to discover the structure of different countries?"

"Which the geologist infers," replied the vicar, "from a few *patterns*, picked up at random on the road-side!"

"Mr Twaddleton," said Mr Seymour, "I will meet you on your own ground: you are an antiquary; if an ancient monument of art be so inestimable, is not a knowledge of the antiquity of the globe itself, at least, of equal interest?"

"Which you think you can discover by penetrating its caverns, with as much ease as the jockey ascertains the age of a horse by looking into its jaws, or by counting the strata of its mountains to ascertain their age, as Sam Slick did that of his cattle, by the number of wrinkles on their horns."

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* Æn. lib. ix.

"I gratefully adopt your simile," said Mr Seymour, "for you have undesignedly furnished me with an illustration that will dispense with a world of argument. If the horns of your cattle are successively developed, in accordance with an organic law, so have the stratified mountains of our globe been arranged in an order, as to their relations to time, which at once forbids the idea of a chaotic origin, or of their being the result of lawless convulsion; but you speak too flippantly of a class of philosophers who have united their efforts to investigate a sublime subject upon the true principles of science; but the truth is, you have never directed your attention to it; you must be initiated in its mysteries under my guidance. I have just procured a little work for my young pupils, a most delightful introduction to the study, entitled 'Thoughts on a Pebble, or a First Lesson in Geology,' by Dr Mantell, and I must request you to read it; for although it does not consist of more than thirty pages, it will expand to your view a new world that will astonish and delight you. I shall afterwards place in your hands the more extended works of this accomplished author, 'Wonders of Geology,' and 'The Medals of Creation;' you will then, so far from undervaluing such researches, regard them as amongst the most interesting that can engage the human understanding."

"Although I may be unknown to your genii of the mountains and caves," observed the vicar, "I am, at all events, acquainted with a kindred class of philosophers, who rival them in industry if not in talents; and notwithstanding the limited range of their observations —being confined to the mountainous districts they inhabit—I have little doubt but that their labours have proved as acceptable to the world as those of the disciples of Hutton or Werner. I once visited this district, and, although the language of its inhabitants was entirely unknown to me, I soon discovered by the aid of a glass, that they were in serious discourse with each other: and one of the elders of the fraternity, who was seated on a craggy precipice that overhung an extensive valley covered with rich verdure, appeared, from his gestures, as if pointing out to his fellow-labourers, who were digging in all directions in search of treasure, the danger of an approaching convulsion. While I was yet gazing, the fatal catastrophe actually occurred; immense masses of the tottering strata rolled with precipitous haste into the valley, involving in its ruin hundreds of its inhabitants. It was extraordinary to behold the effects of this shock upon those who were beyond the reach of its more destructive influence; hundreds were seen scaling heights that appeared inaccessible; others stumbling—falling down frightful precipices—rising again—helping, or pushing each other on—the foremost serving as so many stepping-stones to those behind, who, in their turn, hauled up the clusters over whose backs they had so unceremoniously vaulted."

"How awful!" cried Mrs Seymour; "I never heard of any modern catastrophe of such fearful extent; where did it occur?"

"The vicar doubtless alludes to the terrible earthquake of Messina, or perhaps to that of Lisbon."

"I neither allude to the one nor to the other," cried Mr Twaddleton; "and yet, in some respects, the catastrophe which I have described resembled that of Lisbon; for during the dreadful disaster human beings were seen to take advantage of the confusion to murder many of the inhabitants, and to pillage their territories, and what is still more horrible, to devour their remains with a relish worthy of a Cyclops." (20.)

"For goodness' sake!" cried Mrs Seymour, "tell us at once where this terrible event occurred."

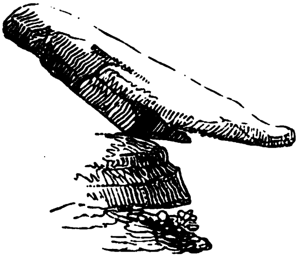
"In a fine Cheshire cheese!" exclaimed the vicar, "which had furnished abundant food to the miniature republic of mites that occupied its deep ravines and alpine heights. I think now," continued the reverend gentleman, "I am amply revenged for the allegorical jokes in which Mr Seymour has so often indulged at my expense."

"I am well satisfied," said Mr Seymour; "for by repeating your allegory to my children, I shall be enabled to convey a striking lesson of wisdom. They will learn from it that there is not any pursuit, however exalted, that may not be assailed by the weapons of ridicule, especially when wielded by those penurious philosophers whose ideas of utility are circumscribed within the narrow limits of direct and immediate profit."

"It is too true," cried Mrs Seymour, "that we are all apt to depreciate those branches of knowledge which do not bear directly upon the comforts or necessities of life; and the applications of geology are, perhaps, so remote as scarcely to be discovered by the mass of mankind."

"There I must differ with you," replied her husband: "to say nothing of the practical advantages which have accrued to the miner, the engineer, and the architect, from this study, it has been the means of bringing hundreds of acres into cultivation in districts where never a blade of grass had before grown (21); while to the philosopher, engaged in inquiries relative to former conditions of our globe, fossils are like medals to the antiquary, recording on blocks of marble, in hieroglyphics as intelligible as those which Major Rawlinson has deciphered on the slabs of Nineveh, the history of a former world and of that gigantic community with which it pleased the Almighty to people it before the creation of man."

If the truth may be told, the vicar's geological hostility arose from that science having shaken the faith of the antiquary in the Druidical origin of rock basins and other supposed remains of that mysterious priesthood. Mr and Mrs Seymour and the vicar had by this time arrived at the Wernerian Temple, where, having discussed several points connected with its objects, Mr Twaddleton gave an account of Major Snapwell, whose history created considerable interest, and determined Mr Seymour to call at Ivy Cottage, and invite its inmate to the Lodge.



CHAPTER VIII.

"TOM, do you remember that I told you a few days ago," said Mr Seymour, "that, by giving a revolving body a peculiar *spinning* motion, certain effects were produced, which I should on some future occasion take into consideration?"

"To be sure I do," replied Tom.

"Well, then, attend to me."

Mr Seymour took a marble, and, placing it on the ground, gave it an impulse forward by pressing his fore-finger upon it; the marble darted forward a few paces, after which it rolled back again.

"That is most extraordinary!" cried Tom: "the marble came back to your hand, as it were, of its own accord, and without having met with any obstacle."

"And you, no doubt," said Mr Seymour, "regard it as contrary to the well-known law, that a body once put in motion, in any direction, will continue to move in that direction until some foreign cause oppose it."

"It really would appear so."

"It is, however, far otherwise; the force which I imparted to the marble communicated to it two kinds of motion; the one projecting it forward, the other producing a rotatory motion round its axis, in a direction opposite to that of its rectilinear course; and the consequence was simply this, that when the former motion, on account of the friction of the marble on the ground, was destroyed, the rotatory motion continued, and, by thus establishing an action in an opposite direction, caused the marble to retrograde.* If, however, you will fetch your hoop, I will demonstrate the fact on a larger scale."

Tom accordingly produced the hoop; and Mr Seymour projected it forward, giving to it, at the same instant, a spinning motion in an opposite direction. The hoop proceeded forward to a certain distance, when it stopped, and then ran back to the hand.

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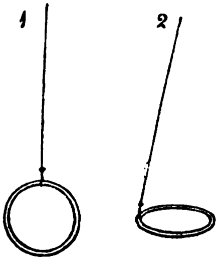
* This movement is well-known to billiard-players.

"Let me beg you," said Mr Seymour, "to treasure this fact in your memory; you perceive by it how greatly the progressive direction of a body may be influenced by a rotatory motion around its axis; and, indeed, the theory of the *rifle* gun (22) is easily deduced from it. It will also explain the effect which a rotatory motion produces in steadying or disturbing the direction of a projectile. It is for such a reason that the balancer constantly whirls round his balls or oranges, as he throws them into the air, with the intention of catching them again; and that in playing at *Bilboquet*, or cup and ball, you find it necessary to give a spinning motion to the ball in order to catch it on the spike—but we will consider that subject presently. I shall also present you with a new missile which has lately found its way into the toyshops, termed tho BOOMERANG. It is used by the natives of Australia, and has the curious property when skilfully directed, after striking the desired object, to return to the thrower (23). I am now desirous of laying down a few propositions upon the subject of rotation, the knowledge of which is essential for the explanation of the motions of revolving bodies."

Mr Seymour proceeded to state that every body had three principal axes upon which it might revolve, but that the shortest was the only one upon which it could permanently and steadily rotate; that should it, in consequence of the impulse given to it, begin to spin upon any other than the shortest axis, it would, during its revolutions, be constantly showing a tendency to approach it; whence it followed that, under such circumstances, it would be unsteady and *wabbling* in its motions.

In order, however, to make this proposition intelligible to the children, Mr Seymour performed the following simple experiment.



Having tied some string to a common curtain ring,* as represented by figure 1, he twisted it round by means of his thumb and finger, until it acquired considerable velocity, when the ring was seen to rise gradually into the position represented by figure 2. Thus, in the simplest manner, was a revolving body shown to exchange its longer for its shorter axis.

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* This experiment will be more readily performed by substituting one of those elastic bands, used for tying up letters.

The children declared that they perfectly comprehended the subject; and Tom observed that, in future, whenever he wished to make a ball spin steadily, he should take care to make it turn on its shorter axis. (24.)

"You are quite right, Tom," said Mr Seymour; "and the skilful bowler at cricket, in order to give his ball a steady axis of rotation, always holds it with the seam across so that the tips of his fingers may touch, and he takes care to hold it only with such a grasp as may be sufficient to steady it, for by a turn even of the wrist it may be made to proceed unsteadily; and this leads me to consider another equally important proposition, viz., that the axis of rotation should coincide with the direction in which it is moving forward, or, in other words, with its line of motion. Now, where this is not the case, it is evident that the unequal action of the air will cause the body to deviate from its straight course, since its two sides, having different velocities (the rotatory and progressive motions conspiring on one side, while they are in opposition on the other), will be differently affected by such resistance; the resistance, of course, increasing with the velocity. It is upon this principle," continued Mr Seymour, "that Sir Isaac Newton has explained the irregular motion of the tennis-ball."

"But do explain to us, papa," said Louisa, "why it is so necessary to spin the ball in order to catch it on the spike."

"Rotatory motion, my dear, when directed according to the principles I have endeavoured to enforce, will always steady the course of a body. In playing at bilboquet, your object is so to throw up the ball that its hole may descend perpendicularly upon the spike which is held for its reception; and in order to accomplish this, you make the ball spin upon an axis, at the extremity of which is the hole; the consequence is obvious."

Louisa observed, that she well remembered an allusion to this game in Miss Edgeworth's Essays on Education; and that, unless she was much deceived, the advantage to be gained by spinning the ball was referred to centrifugal force, and its effect in preserving the "*parallelism of motion*."

"I do not recollect the passage," answered her father; "but I will admit that the centrifugal force is indirectly instrumental to the effect, although, in my view of the subject, it is more philosophical to refer it at once to the creation of an appropriate axis of rotation, and to the permanence of that axis maintained by rapid motion." *

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* A beautiful application of the Gyroscope to the purposes of astronomy has lately been made, enabling observations of the stars to be carried on in a ship tossed to and fro by the waves.—ED.

"I well remember," observed Tom, "that the rider at Astley's whirled round the oranges as he threw them into the air."

"And I hope that you are now not only acquainted with the principle which rendered such a rotatory motion necessary, but that which must make the shorter the more eligible axis for effecting his purpose;—but can you tell me how it could have happened that the oranges, which were thrown perpendicularly upwards while the horseman was on the full gallop, should have fallen again into his hand?"

"Ay," said Louisa, "that puzzled me exceedingly; I should have thought he would have ridden away from them, and that they must have fallen several feet behind him."

"What say you, Tom, to that?" inquired Mr Seymour.

"I suppose that the rider made an allowance for the distance he would pass forward before they could fall, and projected them accordingly."

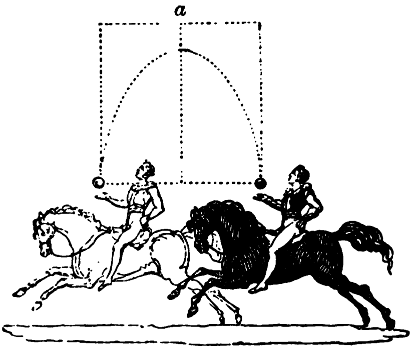
"No, indeed; there is no calculation in the case, nor is any art used to throw the oranges in advance; they are projected perpendicularly from the hand; and if you will only recall to your mind the subject of the 'Composition of Forces,' the mystery will vanish."

"I see it all clearly," cried Tom: "the orange partakes of the progressive motion of the rider; when, therefore, he throws it upwards, it is influenced by two forces which are in the direction of the two sides of a parallelogram, and it consequently describes the diagonal."

"You are quite right; but you doubtless will perceive that, instead of a straight line, the orange will describe a parabolic curve."

"For the same reason, I suppose," said Tom, "that the stone from the sling described a curve?"

"Certainly; but see, I have a diagram which will explain the subject more clearly.



"The orange, as it is thrown into the air, is influenced by two forces: the one arising from the progressive motion of the rider, the other from the projectile force imparted to it. These two forces are in the direction of the adjacent sides of a parallelogram, and were it not for the operation of gravity, the body would accordingly describe its diagonal in the same space of time as it would have described one of the sides.* The influence of gravity, however, not only deflects it from a right line into a curve, but diminishes its force, so that, instead of arriving at the opposite angle of the parallelogram *a*, its greatest altitude will be short of that point; it will then descend through a similar curve; and, since the time of ascent and descent are equal, † it will reach the hand of the rider at the very moment he is prepared to receive it; for the orange will have traversed the parabolic curve in the same space of time as the horseman required for passing from one extremity of the curve to the other."

Mr Seymour having concluded this explanation, much to the satisfaction of the young party, observed that the present occasion was an appropriate one for the introduction of some remarks on the favourite pastime of the HOOP.

"It is a classical pastime," exclaimed the vicar, "and was as common with the Greeks and Romans as it is with boys of the present generation."

"And it has the advantage," added Mr Seymour, "of sending the tide of life in healthful currents through the veins."

Tom began to trundle his hoop along the gravel walk.

"Stop, stop, my dear boy," cried his father; "you seem to have forgotten our compact, that every toy should be fairly won before it was played with. Come upon the lawn, and let me ask you some questions relative to the motions of the hoop. Can you make it stand still upon its edge?"

"Not readily," was Tom's reply.

"And yet," continued Mr Seymour, "during its progressive motion it rolls on its edge without any disposition to fall: how happens that?"

"It is owing to the centrifugal force, which gives it a motion in the direction of a *tangent* to the circle, and, consequently, overcomes the force of gravity."

"Your answer is pat," replied his father: "as long as you give your hoop a certain degree of velocity, the *tangential*, or centrifugal force, overcomes gravity, in the manner you have already witnessed;‡ but, when that is slackened, the hoop will fall on its side; not, however, until it has made several complete revolutions. Now, answer me another question. Why is it so difficult to make the hoop proceed straight forward, without turning to the right or left?"

"I suppose it arises from the same cause as that which altered the direction of my marble as it ran along—the inequality of the ground."

"That," replied his father, "would undoubtedly have its influence;

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* See page 90.

† See page 42.

‡ See page 94.

but it is principally to be referred to the impossibility of your giving constantly a straight blow by the stick. When it is moving forward, a slight inclination towards either side will cause the parts to acquire a motion towards that side, those which are uppermost being most affected by it; and this lateral or sideway motion, assisted sometimes by the irregular curvature of the hoop, causes its path to deviate from a rectilinear direction; so that, instead of moving straight forward, it turns to that side towards which it began to incline; and, in this position, its tendency to fall is still further counteracted by the centrifugal force. It is from a similar cause that the bullet, unless rifled, will have a tendency to go to the right or left, from any unequal impulse which it may have received at the moment of its exit from the barrel. I have yet one other question, and, as its answer will lead us into the consideration of a mechanical subject of some importance, I must beg you to bestow all your attention. In trundling your hoop, have you not often observed that, although the blow inflicted upon it by your stick might have been violent, yet the effect produced by it was comparatively small, in consequence of the hoop having been struck by a disadvantageous part of the stick?"

"Certainly. I have frequently observed that, if the hoop is struck by the stick either too near the hand, or too near the end, much of its force is lost; and I have also noticed the same thing in striking the ball with my cricket-bat."

"The fact is," said Mr Seymour, "that every striking body has what is termed its *centre of percussion,* in which all the percutient force of a body is, as it were, collected; thus, a stick of a cylindrical figure, supposing the centre of motion at the hand, will strike the greatest blow at a point about two-thirds of its length from the wrist. I may, perhaps, at some future time return to this subject, and explain several mechanical effects which are dependent upon it. (25.) Now away with you, and trundle your hoop, or spin your top: as soon as the vicar returns I will rejoin you."

"Stop a moment," cried the vicar; "do you not remember that the sword of Atrides in his conflict with Paris,* as well as that of Turnus in his engagement with Æneas,† broke short and were shivered? And why so? Because, as we may suppose, the blow was struck at a point distant from the centre of percussion, and so produced a jarring vibration that shattered the blade."

"Thus, then, it would appear, vicar, that the gods were unjustly accused of an unfair interference, and philosophy is again to be charged with clipping the wings of poetic fancy."

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* "The brittle sword, unfaithful to his lord,
Broke short."—*Iliad* 3.

† "But all in pieces flies the traitor sword,
And in the middle stroke deserts his lord."—*Æn.* 12.

In the course of an hour, Mr Seymour and his reverend friend returned to the playground, where they found the children busily engaged in their several diversions.

"I rejoice to find you at so classical a pastime," said the vicar, as he approached Tom, who was busily engaged in spinning his top. "The top, my boy, is a subject which the great Mantuan bard did not consider beneath the patronage of his muse: but, hey-day! this is not the '*volitans sub verbere turbo*' of the immortal Virgil; the top of antiquity was the whip-top, the peg-top is a barbarous innovation of modern times: a practical proof of the degeneracy of the race. Even boys, forsooth, must now-a-days have their activity cramped by inventions to supersede labour: well may we regard the weapons, which our sturdy ancestors wielded, as instruments rather calculated for giants than men, if such pains be taken to instil into the minds of youth the mischievous spirit of idleness."

"My dear Sir," said Tom, who was always grieved at displeasing the vicar, "if it will gratify you, I will spin my *whip*-top, for I have an excellent one which my papa has lately given me."

"Well said! my dear boy. '*Puer bonæ spei.*' What a pity would it be to damp so noble a spirit! get your whip-top."

Tom accordingly placed the Virgilian top upon the ground, and as the boy plied the whip, so did the vicar lash the air with his quotation; running round the top in apparent ecstasy, while he repeated the well-known lines from the seventh Æneid:—

"Ille actus habena
Curvatis fertur spatiis: stupet inscia turba,
Impubesque manus, mirata volubile buxum:
Dant animos plagæ." *

As Mr Twaddleton thus gave vent to that fervour which was ever kindled by collision with Virgil, Tom gave motion to his top, which swaggered about with such an air of self-importance, that, to the eye of fancy, it might have appeared as if proudly conscious of the encomiums that had been so liberally lavished upon it.

"The Grecian boys, as Suidas informs us, played also with this top," continued the vicar.

"And pray, may I ask," said Mr Seymour, "whether it was not introduced into this country by the Romans?"

"Probably," replied the vicar, "figures representing boys in the act of whipping their tops first appear in the marginal paintings of the manuscripts of the fourteenth century; at which period the form of the toy was the same as it is at present, and the manner of impelling it by the whip can admit of but little if any difference. In a manuscript* at the British Museum, I have read a very curious anecdote which refers to Prince Henry, the eldest son of James the First: with your permission, I will relate it to you."

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* "The wooden engine flies and whirls about,
Admired, with clamours, of the beardless rout:
They lash aloud; each other they provoke,
And lend their little souls at every stroke."—DRYDEN.

Here the vicar extracted a memorandum-book from his pocket, and read the following note:—

"The first tyme that he, the prince, went to the towne of Sterling to meete the king, seeing a little without the gate of the towne a stack of corne, in proportion not unlike to a topp, wherewith he used to play, he said to some that were with him, 'Loe, there is a goodly topp,' whereupon one of them saying, 'Why doe you not play with it then?' he answered, 'Set it up for me, and I will play with it.'"

"Was not that a clever retort of the young prince?" said the vicar, as he returned the manuscript into his memorandum-book; "and I think it must have confounded the courtier who could have asked so silly a question."

"Well, Tom," said Mr Seymour, "let us see whether you can set up your own top, so that it shall stand steadily on its point."

"I have often tried that experiment," answered Tom, "but could never succeed."

"And yet, when in rotatory motion, its erect position is maintained without difficulty; how is that?"

"Is it not owing to the centrifugal force?" asked Tom.

"Undoubtedly: but as the subject is highly interesting, I will endeavour to explain it more fully. You must, however, first obtain permission from the vicar to spin your humming-top, for that will better illustrate the phenomena which it is my wish to examine."

"If your object is the exercise of the body, let us spin the whip-top," replied the vicar; "but if you wish to exercise the boy's mind, I cannot object to your selecting the top best calculated to fulfil that desire."

Tom, having accordingly prepared his top, pulled the string, and set the wooden machine spinning and humming on the floor.

"Now, Tom, I will explain to you the reason of the top being able to sustain its vertical position. You have already learned, from the action of the sling, that a body cannot move in a circular path without making an effort to fly off in a right line from the centre;† so that, if a body be affixed to a string and whirled round by the hand, it will stretch it, and in a greater degree according as the circular motion is more rapid."

"Certainly," said Tom.

"The top, then, being in motion, all its parts tend to recede from the axis, and with greater force the more rapidly it revolves; hence it follows that these parts are like so many powers acting in a direction perpendicular to the axis; but, as they are all equal, and as they pass all round with rapidity by the rotation, the result must be that the top is in equilibrio on its point of support, or on the extremity of the axis on which it turns. But see, your top is down."

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* Harl. lib. i. marked 6391.

† Page 95.

"And what is the reason," asked Tom, "of its motion being stopped?"

"I can answer that question, papa," said Louisa; "is it not owing to the friction of the ground?"

"Certainly; that has, doubtless, its influence, but the resistance of the air is also a powerful force upon this occasion. A top has been made to spin *in vacuo* as long as two hours and sixteen minutes.[*] But come, Tom, spin your top once more. Observe," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "how obliquely the top is spinning. It is now gradually rising out of an oblique position;—now it is steadily spinning on a vertical axis;—and now its motion is so steady that it scarcely seems to move."

"It is *sleeping*,[†] as we call it," said Tom.

"Its centre of gravity is now situated perpendicularly over its point of support, which is the extremity of the axis of rotation: but attend to me," continued Mr Seymour, "for I am about to attempt the explanation of a phenomenon which has puzzled many older and wiser philosophers than yourselves. It is evident that the top, in rising from an oblique to a vertical position, must have its centre of gravity raised; what can have been the force which effected this change?"

"Was it the centrifugal force?" asked Tom.

"Certainly not," said Mr Seymour, "as I will presently convince you."

"Then it must have been the resistance of the air," said Louisa.

"No, nor was it the resistance of the air," replied her father; "for the same effect takes place *in vacuo*."

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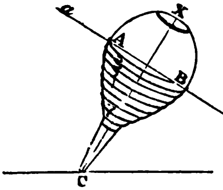
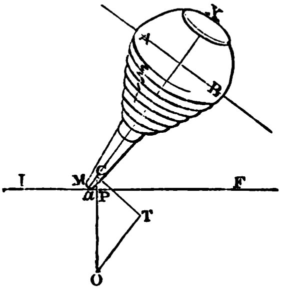
[*] Short on 'Serson's Horizontal Top,' Phil. Trans. xlvii. 352.

[†] "Still humming on, their drowsy course they keep,
And lash'd so long like *tops*, are lash'd to sleep."
—POPE.

Plain matter-of-fact persons, like you and the author, gentle reader, will be content to regard the term, "*sleeping*," as simply expressive of that quiescent state which the top thus assumes. Not so, however; Mr Prybabel, while smiling at our simplicity, informs us that the phrase is derived from the Italian word *topo*, a mouse, from which the Italian proverb, "*Il dormo comme un topo*,"—He sleeps like a *dormouse*—has been corruptly translated into, "He sleeps like a *top*." Many similar instances of verbal corruption might be given. We will adduce one which may be interesting to our juvenile readers, as it will explain the true meaning of the *glass-slipper* of Cinderella. "*Vair*," the skin of the gray squirrel, (*Peltis gris*,) was the fur held next in estimation to ermine, in the fourteenth century. It was so called from its variety of colour, the back of the squirrel being gray, the underneath part of its body white. Cinderella's slipper was of this fur, a "*Pantouffle de vair*," which being wrongly written "*verre*," gave rise to the rendering of a *glass* slipper.—(*Arts of the Middle Ages, by M. Jul. Labarte.*)

"Then pray inform us by what means the top was raised."





"It entirely depended upon the form of the extremity of the peg, and not upon any simple effect connected with the rotatory or centrifugal force of the top. I will first satisfy you that, were the peg to terminate in a fine, that is to say, in a *mathematical* point, the top never could raise itself. Let A B C be a top spinning in an oblique position, having the end of the peg, on which it spins, brought to a fine point. It will continue to spin in the direction in which it reaches the ground, without the least tendency to rise into a more vertical position; and it is by its rotatory or centrifugal force that it is kept in this original position; for if we conceive the top divided into two equal parts, A and B, by a plane passing through the line X C, and suppose that at any moment during its spinning the connexion between these two parts were suddenly dissolved, then would any point in the part A fly off with the given force in the direction of the tangent, and any corresponding point in the part B with an equal force in an opposite direction; whilst, therefore, these two parts remain connected together, during the spinning of the top, these two equal and opposite forces A and B will balance each other, and the top will continue to spin on its original axis. Having thus shown that the rotatory or centrifugal force can never make the top rise from an oblique to a vertical position, I shall proceed to explain the true cause of this change, and I trust you will be satisfied that it depends upon the bluntness of the point. Let A B C be a top spinning in an oblique position, terminating in a very short point with a hemispherical shoulder, P *a* M. It is evident that, in this case, the top will not spin upon *a*, the end of the true axis X *a*, but upon P, a point in the circle P M to which the floor I F is a tangent. Instead, therefore, of revolving upon a fixed and stationary point, the top will roll round upon the small circle P M on its blunt point, with very considerable friction, the force of which may be represented by a line, O P, at right angles to the floor, I F, and to the spherical end of the peg of the top: now it is the action of this force, by its pressure on one side of the blunt point of the top, which causes it to rise in a vertical direction. Produce the line

O P till it meets the axis C; from the point C draw the line C T perpendicular to the axis *a* X, and T O parallel to it; and then, by a resolution of forces, the line T C will represent that part of the friction which presses at right angles to the axis, so as gradually to raise it in a vertical position; in which operation the circle P M gradually diminishes by the approach of the point P to *a*, as the axis becomes more perpendicular, and vanishes when the point P coincides with the point *a*, that is to say, when the top has arrived at its vertical position, where it will continue to *sleep*, without much friction, or any other disturbing force, until its rotatory motion fails, and its side is brought to the earth by the force of gravity."

"I *think* I understand it," said Tom, "although I have some doubt about it; but if you would be so kind as to give me the demonstration in writing, I will diligently study it."

"Most readily," said Mr Seymour. "Indeed I cannot expect that you should comprehend so difficult a subject without the most patient investigation; and, in the present state of your knowledge, I am compelled to omit the relation of several very important circumstances, to which I may, hereafter, direct your attention. When, for instance, you have become acquainted with the elements of astronomy, I shall be able to show you that the gyration of the top depends upon the same principles as the precession of the equinoxes." (26.)

CHAPTER IX.

MR SEYMOUR, having observed his children busily engaged at the game of Trap and Ball, determined, as usual, to make it subservient to scientific instruction. With this view he hastily sketched a diagram, and proceeded with it to the scene of sport.

"Now, Tom, let me see how far you have profited by our late conversation. I have some questions to ask you about the action of your Trap and Ball," said his father.

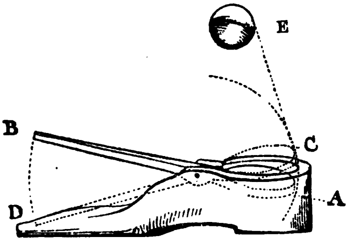
"I do not suppose there is much philosophy in the game," observed Tom.

"Of that we shall judge presently. Can you tell me the direction which the ball takes after it flies from the spoon of the trap, in consequence of the blow of the bat upon the trigger?"

"It flies upwards, to be sure, and allows me to strike it with my bat," answered the boy.

"Very true; but at what angle? I see you hesitate; look, therefore, at the diagram I have prepared, and attend to my explanation of it."

Mr Seymour produced the sketch which we here present to our readers.



"A B represent the spoon and trigger in their quiescent position. Upon striking the end B with the bat, they are brought into the position C D. The spoon will thus have described the small arc A C, when it will be suddenly stopped by the end of the trigger D coming into contact with the shoe. The motion of the ball, however, will not be arrested, and it will consequently be projected forward out of the spoon."

"Exactly," exclaimed Louisa, "in the same manner as the shilling flew off the wine-glass, or a person on a galloping horse would be thrown over the head by its suddenly stopping."

"I thank you, Louisa; your memory, I perceive, has not suffered from the drenching you received from the water-cart;* but can you tell me," continued Mr Seymour, "the direction which the ball will take *after* its release from the spoon?"

This was a step beyond Louisa's knowledge, and her father, in order to assist her, begged her to consider in what direction it was moving *before* it left the spoon.

"You have just told us," said Tom, "that it described an arc, or portion of a circle."

"Very well," said Mr Seymour; "and did not the philosophy of your sling teach you that, when a body revolving in a circle is suddenly disengaged, it will fly off in a right line in the direction in which it was moving at the instant of its release?—the ball, therefore, will dedescribe the tangent C E."

"It is all clear enough to me now," said Tom, evidently vexed that he had overlooked a principle which had been so lately explained to him by the action of his sling.

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* See page 50.

“I now see, too,” added Tom, “why the ball seldom flies off at the same angle in every trap.”

“That,” said his father, “must, of course, depend upon the extent of the arc described by the spoon, and which will, of course, vary in different traps.

“Before we conclude the subject, let me ask you whether there is not some one point in the bat, at which you can most effectually strike the ball?”

“To be sure,” answered Tom, “in the same way that there is a point in my hoop-stick at which I can give the strongest blow—and that point is termed the *Centre* of Percussion.”

“Enough,” said Mr Seymour; “see, here comes the vicar.”

True to the hour appointed, did Mr Twaddleton make his appearance, just at the conclusion of the discussion above described; and, as he approached the party, Louisa observed that he was carrying a canvas bag in his hand.

“What have you there?” asked Mr Seymour: “a sack of sugar-plums?”

“No, no; spheres of larger diameter. “Here,” said the vicar, as he opened his bag, “is a foot-ball for you, Tom; and here is a hand-ball for you, Louisa.” He then presented each of the other children with a similar present, exclaiming—

> “‘Nemo ex hoc numero mihi non donatus abibit,’[*]

as Virgil has it.”

“Perhaps,” said Mr Seymour, “you will enhance the value of this favour by giving us an antiquarian history of the ball, which will be very acceptable to us at this time, as we have just concluded a philosophical inquiry upon that subject.”

To this request the vicar readily assented, and proceeded as follows:—

“The Greeks appear to have played with four kinds of ball; viz., the *little ball*, the *great ball*, the *empty ball* (σφαῖρα κενή), which was blown up with air, like our foot-ball, and the *leathern ball* (κώρυκον), which was suspended from the ceiling, and stuffed with bran or sand, as those who tossed it were robust or delicate. The Romans,” continued the vicar, “had also four kinds of *pilæ*, or balls; the *follis*, a large ball made of leather and blown up with air, like our foot-ball; the larger kinds of which were struck with the arm, the smaller ones with the fist. Suetonius tells us that Augustus Cæsar greatly delighted in the amusement; and in truth it was a glorious sport, an exercise equally adapted for the young and old; or, as Martial has it—

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[*] “Not one amongst you shall depart without a gift from me.”—*Æn.* v. 305.

> '*Folle* decet pueros ludere, *folle* senes.'" *

"And yet," said Mr Seymour, "neither Horace nor Virgil played at it; do you not remember the lines in the fifth satire?—

> 'Lusum it Mæcenas, dormitum ego Virgiliusque;
> Namque pilâ lippis inimicum et ludere crudis.'" †

"Many thanks, Mr Seymour, many thanks for brushing up my recollection; but I am a little doubtful about the game at which Mæcenas played at Capua: I have, by the by, lately read ‡ an account of a peculiar game of ball for which the city of Sierra is celebrated, and it is supposed to be that referred to by Horace—'It is played in the foss, which has a very high wall, and it is not unlike a tennis-court; the ball is very large, and appears to be inflated with air; the arm is defended by a wooden guard or shield; at certain periods of the game, one of the players runs down a spring-board, and throwing the whole of his weight, momentum, and strength upon the ball, as it is thrown towards him, he strikes it to an astonishing distance.' The second kind of ball," continued the vicar, "was termed *trigonalis*, which is conjectured to have been nearly the same as our tennis-ball. It derived its name from the position of the three persons who played with it; they were placed in a triangle, and alternately caught and tossed the ball, and he who first let it fall to the ground was the loser. The third kind of ball was the *paganica*, as being much used in country villages. Some authors state it to have been constructed of leather, and stuffed with feathers, while others conjecture it to have been a large kind of *follis*. The fourth was the *harpastum*; a small ball, so called because the gamesters endeavoured to snatch it from each other. The ball was thrown unexpectedly to some one of the players, and he as unexpectedly threw it at another; hence it caused a variety of anxious and watchful movements."

"It seems," observed Lousia, "to be a sport better adapted to boys than girls."

"In that supposition you are quite mistaken," replied the vicar; "on the contrary, the hand-ball would seem to have been originally a female sport, for Homer has restricted the pastime to the princess and young maidens of Corcyra; at least, he has not mentioned its ever having been practised by the men; but upon this point critics differ.

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* Lib. xiv. epig. 43.

† "Mæcenas goes to tennis, hurtful game
To a weak stomach, and to tender eyes;
So down to sleep with Virgil, Horace lies."
—FRANCIS.

Horace suffered from weak eyes, and Virgil from shortness of breath; so that Mæcenas, when sitting between them, used to say, that "*he was between tears and sighs.*"

‡ "Two Hundred and Nine Days," or "The Journal of a Traveller on the Continent," by Jefferson Hogg. London, 1827.

> 'O'er the green mead the sporting *virgins* play,
> Their shining veils unbound; along the skies,
> Toss'd and re-toss'd, the ball incessant flies.'"*

Mr Seymour said that, as the vicar had satisfied them of the high antiquity of the ball, he hoped he would now afford them some information respecting its use in England.

"The game of hand-ball," said the vicar, "called by the French *palm-play*, because the exercise consisted originally in receiving the ball, and driving it back again with the *palm of the hand*, was formerly a favourite pastime among the youth of both sexes; and in many parts of the kingdom it was customary for them to play at this game during the Easter holidays for tansy cakes. In ancient times, the mayor and aldermen of Newcastle used to go in state at the feasts of Easter and Whitsuntide, to a little mall of the town, to witness this game. It was originally played with the naked hand; then with a glove, which in some instances was lined; afterwards, cords and catgut strings were bound upon the hand to make the ball rebound more forcibly."

"That custom," observed Mr Seymour, "doubtless, gave origin to the *racket*."

"It did," replied the vicar; "and the places where this game was played were called *tennis-courts*, and the game itself obtained the name of *tennis*, from the French word *tenez*† (take it, hold it), frequently used during the exercise. The pastime, I believe, was introduced amongst our ancestors about the year 1222, the sixth year of Henry III., by persons of superior rank and family, who erected courts or oblong edifices for the performance of the exercise."

"I long to hear something about foot-ball," exclaimed Tom.

"That is a pastime," said the vicar, "which was formerly in great vogue in England, but of late years it has fallen into disrepute, having apparently merged in the more popular game of *cricket*.‡ It derives its name, as you may suppose, from the circumstance of the ball being driven by the foot, in preference to the hand. When a match is made, two parties, equal in numbers, take the field, and stand between two goals, which are placed at the distance of eighty or a hundred yards from each other. The ball, which is commonly a blown bladder, cased with leather, is delivered in the midst of the ground, and the object of either party is to drive it through the goal of their opponents, by which the game is won. The abilities of the performers are best displayed in attacking and defending the goals, whence the pastime is more frequently called a *goal*, than a *game* at foot-ball. In this attack and defence, the exercise becomes exceedingly violent; the players kick each other's shins without the least ceremony; and this occasioned James I. to speak of foot-ball as '*meeter for laming than making able the users thereof.*'"

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* Pope's Odyssey, lib. v.

† This etymology has been disputed, and it has been said that the holding or keeping possession of the ball is no part of the game; for, during the play, the ball is in continual motion, or passing from one to another. Others seek the etymology of the name, and the origin of the game, in a place in France called Tennois; or, by a change of one letter, Sennois, in the district of Champagne, where balls were first made, and the game, as it is said, first introduced.

‡ *Cricket*, from a Saxon word signifying a *stick*.

"I believe," said Mr Seymour, "that the ancient game of *goff* is still much practised in Scotland."

"It is," replied the vicar. "In the reign of Edward III. the Latin name *cambuca*, a crooked club, or staff, was applied to this pastime, because it was played with such an instrument. The bat was also styled a *bandy*, from its being bent; and hence the game itself is frequently called *bandy-ball*."

"And how is it played?" asked Tom.

"It is played on a smooth common, by driving forward two small hard balls, with the *bandy* I have just described, into very distant holes in the ground, about a foot deep, and nine inches over: and the party whose ball is driven into these holes with the fewest strokes is the victor."

"You have omitted to speak of that favourite game in the reign of Charles II., called *Pall Mall*," observed Mr Seymour.

"I thank you for reminding me: it was a game played in a vista, now bearing the name of the *Mall*, in St James's Park, at the end of which stood a pole, with a hoop suspended from an arm at its top, through which the ball was to be driven, by a *mall* or *mallet*."

"But come," said Mr Seymour, "it is high time to think of our dinner; the children must require some refreshment. I am not, my dear vicar, one of those philosophers who believe that play was invented by the Lydians* as a remedy against hunger; nor do I subscribe to the opinion of the elder Scriblerus, that it was on such an account wisely contrived by Nature, that children who have the keenest appetites should, at the same time, be those who are most addicted to sport."

"Whether you believe or not that the Lydians invented sports shall not be a subject of contest between us," said the reverend antiquary; "but," continued he, "one thing is quite certain, that the Lydian games were at first called *Lydi* by the Romans; and afterwards by corruption *Ludi*; a presumption, I must needs say, in favour of the Lydian claim. But enough of this; to what do you propose we should next turn our attention? I doubt not you have some new sport for our recreation as well as our instruction," added the vicar.

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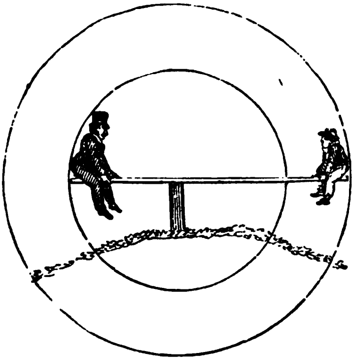
* Herodotus speaks of the inhabitants of Lydia having successfully had recourse to gaming, as a partial substitute for food, during a famine of many years' continuance.

"We will, if you please, attend the children to their *see-saw*, which the gardener has lately constructed for them," said Mr Seymour.

The party accordingly walked to the grove, in which a plank had been placed across a wooden post; and upon which Tom and John had been riding for some time in the earlier part of the morning. The boys again mounted their new hobby; and, after amusing themselves for some minutes, Mr Seymour desired them to stop, in order that Tom might explain the principle upon which the *see-saw* acted. Tom replied, that he was not aware of any principle which could apply to riding on a plank.

"Have I not often told you, my dear boy, that the principles of Natural Philosophy may be brought to bear on the most trivial acts of life? Listen, therefore, and you shall find that your present amusement teems with instruction. You are already well acquainted with the nature and operations of the centre of gravity; tell me, therefore, whereabouts it lies in the plank upon which you are riding."



"I should think," replied Tom, "that in this instance the centres of gravity and magnitude must coincide, or be very nearly in the same point."

"The centre of gravity must, as you say, be very nearly in the middle of the board; and, if that be the case, you will allow that, supposing those who ride upon it are of equal weight, the plank must be supported in the centre to make the two arms equal; but you and John are of unequal weight, so that you perceive the plank must be drawn a little farther over the prop to make the arms unequal; and John, who is the lighter, must be placed at the extremity of the longer arm. Thus arranged, you will exactly balance each other; and as each of you, on your descent, touches the ground with your feet, the reaction affords you a spring, which destroys the equilibrium, and enables you to oscillate in arcs about the centre of motion."

"Do we then describe the arcs of a circle as we ascend and descend?"

"Undoubtedly you must. Look at this diagram," said Mr Seymour, "and you will see at once that the plank can only move round its centre of motion; for how could you rise, or your brother fall, perpendicularly in a straight line? You must, in rising, and he, in descending, describe arcs of your respective circles. It is equally evident that his velocity must be very superior to yours; for, if you could swing quite round, you would each complete your respective circles in the same time."

"It would really appear so," said Tom; "and I have myself observed that the lighter person has the better ride, as he moves both farther and quicker, and I now understand the reason of it; it is because, being farther from the centre of motion, he describes a larger arc."

"The greater velocity with which your little brother moves, renders his momentum equal to yours. You have the most gravity, he the greatest velocity; so that, upon the whole, your momenta are equal: for you, no doubt, remember that momentum is weight multiplied into velocity.* You have here, then, a striking instance of mechanical advantage gained by opposing motion to matter, or velocity to weight; for I think you will readily admit, that, without the aid of the plank, your little brother could never have raised you from the ground."

"That is clear enough," said Tom.

"The plank, then, thus arranged," continued his father, "constitutes what has been termed a *mechanical power*, to which the name of *lever* has been given; it is not, however, my intention at present to enter into the history of these powers, of which there are six distinct kinds; the one presented to you, in the instance of the *see-saw*, is perhaps the most simple, and not the least important of them."

"It is very curious," observed the vicar, "to reflect upon what a simple, and apparently trifling fact, the powers of civilized man may be said to depend. The single truth you have just announced, of making velocity a compensation for weight, has supplied his weak arm with the means of controlling the very elements."

"It is very true," said Mr Seymour; "and we might go so far as to say that, had it been the will of the Almighty Creator of the universe to have withheld from matter that property which we have been discussing, man must have remained the most helpless and forlorn of His creatures. I now propose," added Mr Seymour, "to accompany the children to their swing; the present is a suitable opportunity for giving them some idea of the doctrine of oscillation, or the theory of the pendulum."

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* See page 47.

The children had commenced the sport, and Mr Seymour informed Tom and Louisa, who were attentively watching the motions of the swing, that its vibrations, like those of the pendulum of a clock, were produced by its effort to fall, from the force of gravity, and its power of ascending through an arc similar and opposite to that through which it had descended, from the momentum acquired during its descent.

"Like the bandalore, I suppose," said Louisa.

"Exactly, my dear, that is a very good comparison; for as the *bandalore*, having descended along the string by its gravity, acquires such a momentum as to enable it to ascend the same string, and thus, as it were, to wind itself up; so does the pendulum or swing, during its descent, acquire a force that carries it up in an opposite arc to an equal height as that from which it had fallen. But tell me, Tom, whether you have not discovered that the motion of your new swing differs from that which you experienced in your former one?"

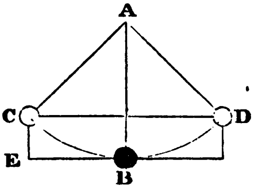
"The ropes of our present swing are so much longer than those which we formerly used, that the motion is much pleasanter."

"Is that all?" said Mr Seymour. "Have you not observed that you also swing much slower?"

"I have certainly noticed that," said Tom.

"It is a law which I am desirous of impressing upon your memory, that the shorter the pendulum, or swing, the quicker are its motions, and *vice versâ:* indeed, there is an established relation between the velocity and the length, which I shall hereafter endeavour to explain to you. Galileo, the celebrated philosopher, and mathematician to the Duke of Florence, accordingly proposed a method of ascertaining the height of the arched ceiling of a church by the vibrations of a lamp suspended from it. The solution of the problem was founded on the law to which I have just alluded, but which involves mathematical considerations, with which it is not my present intention to perplex you. Now it is known that, in the latitude of London, a pendulum, if 39 inches and two-tenths in length, will vibrate seconds, or make 60 swings in a minute; by observing, therefore, how much the pendulous body deviates from this standard, we may, by the application of the appropriate rule, find its length; if the distance from the bottom of the lamp to the pavement be then measured, which may be done by means of a stick, and added to the former result, the sum will give the height of the arch above the pavement; but I will shew you the experiment the next time we go into Overton church: the vicar can tell us the exact height of the roof, and I will try how nearly I can approach the truth, by observing with a stop-watch how many seconds one vibration of the chandelier continues."

"But, papa, why surely the duration of its vibration must depend upon the force which you may happen to give to the chandelier?"



"Not in the least; and this brings us at once to the consideration of the most curious and important fact in the history of the pendulum, and for a knowledge of which we are also indebted to Galileo.* It is termed the *isochronous*† property, or that by which all its vibrations, whether great or small, are performed in exactly the same period of time: but that you may be better able to comprehend this subject, attend to the diagram which I have prepared for your instruction. Suppose that the swing or pendulum A B be raised to C, it will, in effect, be raised the perpendicular height E C, and in falling will describe the arc C B; and, in the point B, it will have that velocity which is acquired by descending through C B, or by a body falling freely through the perpendicular C E. This velocity will be sufficient to cause it to ascend through an equal arc B D, to the same height from whence it fell at C; and since the times of ascent and descent are equal, it will describe both these arcs in exactly the same space of time. Having lost all its motion at D, it will again begin to descend by its own gravity; and in the lowest point B it will acquire the same velocity as before, which will cause it to re-ascend to C; and thus, by ascending and descending, it will perform continual vibrations in the circumference C B D; and, were it not for the resistance of the air, and the friction at the centre of motion A, the vibrations would never cease; but from these obstructions, though small, it happens that the velocity of the mass of matter at B is a little diminished in every vibration; and consequently it does not return precisely to the same points C or D, but the arcs described continually become shorter and shorter, till at length they grow insensible; and yet the very same time is required for the performance of the shorter as the longer arcs; for, although in the one case the body passes over less space, still its velocity is proportionally decreased. You perceive, then, that in an attempt to ascertain the height of a ceiling by the vibrations of a chandelier, the extent of its swing cannot alter the time which may be required for its completion. And, if you will place your little brother in the swing, you will perceive that he will return to your hand in nearly the same space of time, whether he describes a large or small arc; although this experiment must be

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* This discovery was published at Paris, in a treatise called "*L'Usage du Cadran, ou de l'Horloge Physique Universelle*," in the year 1639; from which may be dated the invention of the pendulum.

† Compounded of the Greek words ἴσος, equal, and χρόνος, time.

considered as extremely rude, since there are many disturbing causes for which the theory cannot possibly make any allowance. I must, moreover, warn you that, where the arc described is very considerable, the difference in the time will be greater; for in order to insure this property of vibrating through unequal arcs in equal times, it is necessary that the path of the body should describe a peculiar curve, called a cycloid (27), and not the segment of a circle; at present, however, it is not possible for us to enter into this difficult branch of science, although I trust that at some future period I shall be justified in an attempt to explain it.

"Before taking leave of the pendulum, let me state that in consequence of experiments by M. Foucalt, its vibrations have assumed a new and very unexpected interest, no less, indeed, than that of rendering palpable to your vision the rotation of the earth round its axis; and still farther by the simple adjustment of an hororary circle, over which it is made to swing, to record and exhibit to the eye the rate of its motion; and all this is seen as distinctly as we see a horse going its rounds in a mill. The explanation is equally simple:—The pendulum swinging in space will retain its parallelism of motion, and not deviate from the plane in which it began to oscillate, while the earth will revolve independent of it."

Mr Seymour having concluded his lecture, was about to return to the Lodge, when Mrs Seymour approached the party, carrying in her hands a letter, which the smile on her countenance announced to contain agreeable intelligence.

"I have just received," said Mrs Seymour, "a letter from Miss Villers, whom you must all remember as a most delightful person. I am informed that she is about to be married to the nephew of a gentleman who is at present in our neighbourhood in search of a country residence."

"Does she mention the gentleman's name?" inquired the vicar.

"Mr Henry Beacham," said Mrs Seymour.

"The nephew of Major Snapwell, I declare!" exclaimed the delighted vicar.

The whole party participated in the pleasure which their excellent friend expressed at this discovery, and Mr Seymour immediately accompanied Mr Twaddleton to Ivy Lodge, to congratulate the major, and to make such arrangements as might expedite the purchase of Osterley Park, and the consequent introduction of a family into the neighbourhood of Overton, from whose society the Seymours anticipated the highest satisfaction.

At the same time Mrs Seymour hastened to despatch a letter to Miss Villers, in order to solicit her immediate presence at Overton Lodge.

CHAPTER X.

IN our last chapter we left Mr Seymour and his reverend friend on their way to Ivy Cottage: it is only necessary to state that the major received them with that satisfaction and gratitude which the nature of their visit could not fail to produce. Plans were proposed, and arrangements concluded, for the furtherance of the object we have announced: in short, in the brief space of an hour, the major had determined the course of his future life, and had framed schemes of happiness, and visions of domestic peace, which he impatiently sought to realise. The vicar was detained by the major, but Mr Seymour quitted Ivy Lodge and returned to his family. He found the children engaged at playing at marbles. Tom was displaying to his sisters many instances of his adroitness and skill in shooting at and hitting marbles.

"Why, Tom," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "how came you possessed of such a multitude of marbles?"

"By luck; good luck, papa; I won them all before the holidays; and I can assure you that my schoolfellows acknowledge me as one of the best players at *ring-taw* in the school."

"Justly, then, has your merit been rewarded," said the father. "Have you not read of the skilful Roman, who could blow peas through a quill, and deposit them with such nicety on the point of a pin, placed at some distance, as rarely to miss his aim?"

"And what was his reward?" asked Tom.

"A bushel of peas, my boy, which the emperor commanded to be presented to him. But do not misunderstand me: far be it from my wish to disparage your skill; whatever we undertake, we should endeavour to accomplish; I am, therefore, well pleased to find that you can play at marbles with so much success."

"I wonder who invented marbles?" said Tom.

"That question, my dear, must be addressed to Mr Twaddleton, who, I have no doubt, will immediately answer it."

Scarcely had these words been spoken, when their "*Fidus Achates*" appeared on the lawn. Mr Seymour informed him of the subject of their conversation, and added, that he had just told the children he was sure he would readily answer their question.

"Not so readily as you may imagine," replied the vicar; "but I will tell you all I know upon the subject. It appears to be a very ancient game; for it is stated by Suetonius, that Augustus, when a youth, spent many hours in the day in playing with little Moorish boys '*cum nucibus*,' that is, *with nuts*, which appear to have been then used in the very way in which you now play with your marbles. In later times, round stones, picked out of gravel, were introduced for this purpose. The marbles which you now hold in your hand are substitutes of still more modern invention. The best of them are imported from Holland, where, as I have been informed, they are manufactured by grinding fragments of alabaster and of other stones, in an iron mill of a peculiar construction, in which there are several partitions furnished with rasps, which turn with great velocity, by means of a stream of water; and thus, having rounded the stones, project them out of different holes for which their size may adapt them. Thus manufactured, they are brought down the Rhine, and from thence dispersed throughout Europe; immense quantities are also exported to India and China. There are, however, as you well know, inferior kinds, which are of home manufacture, and consist of potter's clay covered with a glaze, and burnt in a furnace."

"I have often wondered what is the meaning of the words *taw* and *ally*," observed Tom.

"Why, your *taw* is a brown marble, and your *ally*, if I remember rightly, a very white one; is it not so?" asked the vicar.

"To be sure," said Tom.

"Very well, then," said the vicar, "the words are clearly abbreviations of *tawny* and *alabaster*."

"Now, then," said Mr Seymour, "for a game; what is it to be, Tom?"

"*Ring-taw* for ever!" cried Tom; "it is the only game of marbles worth playing at."

"It is really so long since I left school," observed his father, "that

I must beg you to refresh my memory, and give me some instructions about this favourite game of yours."

"I will tell you all about it. We must first draw a circle, on which each player is to put a certain number of marbles, to be previously agreed upon; we then make a mark at some distance, which is called the *offing*, and from which we are to shoot at the marbles in the ring."

"That is all very intelligible," observed his father; "and I suppose the object of the player is to shoot a marble out of the ring, which not only gives him that marble, but entitles him to shoot again at another, and so on, until he misses, or all the marbles are won."

"That is right, papa."

"And a good marksman," observed the vicar, "who has the first shot, may easily win the game, before any other player can gain the opportunity of shooting at a single marble."

"I see that clearly," said Mr Seymour; "he may strike out a marble from the circle, and then shoot at another, and in this manner traverse the whole ring; I therefore conclude, that good players will always demand a large ring, or else there would not be much chance for any one, except for him who played first."

"That is the game; but I must tell you," said Tom, "that if the player should leave his own marble in the ring, he is at once put out; and should it be within a certain distance on the outside, an adversary may shoot at it, and, by hitting it, put him also out of the game."

"I believe that I am now a perfect master of the subject," said Mr Seymour; "what say you, vicar?"

"I understand it; and it appears to me to be capable of some scientific calculation; but the practical results must, of course, differ very widely from the theory, for the unevenness of the ground, and the inaccurate construction of the marble, are circumstances which never can be duly estimated."

"Certainly not," replied Mr Seymour: "these difficulties even exist at the game of billiards (28), where the table is smooth and perfectly horizontal: but we do not require perfect accuracy, an approximation to it will be sufficient for the purposes of illustration; we will, therefore, if you please, proceed at once to the game, and I will endeavour to point out to Tom the nature and direction of the several forces by which each marble will be influenced."

Tom, accordingly, like the son of Cornelius Scriblerus, converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and described, with the toe of his shoe, the necessary circle upon the ground. Each party, by agreement, placed two marbles upon the ring, and it fell to the lot of the vicar to open the campaign. Mr Twaddleton then advanced, and, with the assumed air of a true knight-errant, approached the ring, exclaiming with a loud voice, and with a gesture of inexpressible drollery, "I demand gracious leave that I may be delivered of my vow, and forthwith combat in the lists;" so saying, he unfurled his red banner, and sounded a trumpet; or, in more humble phraseology, he extracted his handkerchief from his pocket, and applying it to his nasal organs, produced a loud and thrilling blast, which frightened every sparrow from its resting-place. After this preliminary ceremonial, he marshalled his limbs into the most appropriate attitude, and, thrusting one hand behind the exuberant tail of his coat, he, with the other, shot forth his missile at the largest marble opposite to him. His *taw* faithfully delivered its errand, and inflicted such a blow upon the paunch of his antagonist, that, although nearly twice the size of its assailant, like a true bully, it skulked off, and retreated several feet beyond the lists; but, alas! the little marble of the vicar —unlucky wight!—was so stunned by the operation, that it staggered, and reeled backwards into the ring, and thus, according to the established law of the field, completed by one act the total defeat of its luckless commander.

"Your marble is left in the ring!" exclamed Tom, with a shout of triumph.

"I see how it happened," said Mr Seymour; "the vicar struck the marble plump, or 'played a full ball,' as we say at billiards, and the result easily admits of explanation. You already know that a marble possesses elasticity; when, therefore, the one in the ring was struck, it went off with a velocity equal to that with which the striking marble approached it, while the latter, in return, received a blow equal to that it gave, which destroyed its motion. When we go back into the library, I will exhibit a very pretty experiment in further elucidation of this philosophical truth." (29.)

It was now Mr Seymour's turn to enter the lists. He carefully applied his knuckles to the ground, and, taking aim at a little marble which he had selected as his victim, gallantly shot the missile from his thumb and finger; but, alas! alas! the goddess, whatever may be her name, who presides over this species of tournay, doubtless saw the impending fate of her favourite, and after the example of Venus, who turned aside the weapon from Æneas, assumed the shape of a small pebble, and thus arrested the fatal course of the marble, and gave it a new direction, which sent it curveting through the ring, without comitting one single act of devastation.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Tom; "it is now my turn."

The boy, according to the usage of the field, might at once have won the game by striking his father's marble; but he was too magnanimous to take such an advantage, and too eager to display his own skill to cut the game short by a manœuvre: he had determined to win his laurels by hard fighting and generalship. He accordingly proceeded to strike a ring marble; in effecting which he had, like the vicar, challenged a *gigantic knight* as his antagonist; but instead of striking it *plump*, he struck its upper quarter, so that it was rolled out of the ring, while the striking marble, imparting only a portion of its momentum, continued to move forward after the impact. This course was greeted with the acclamations of Mr Seymour and the vicar, the latter of whom declared it to have been "nobly run," and gallantly accomplished; and, extracting a sixpence from his waistcoat-pocket, exclaimed, after the manner of chivalry, "*Largesse! largesse!*—glory to the sons of the brave!—glory to the invincible knight of the taw!"

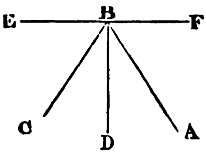
The boy had not only struck the marble out of the ring, but he had, at the same time, contrived to place his own marble in the most favourable position for his future operations; and, indeed, it may be here observed, that in this consists the art of playing the game. It is almost unnecessary to add that Tom won every marble in succession.

Mr Seymour then proceeded to explain the laws of impact, by which the movement of each marble was directed. He observed, that the subject embraced two propositions—viz., the direction of the *object* marble after having been struck, and that of the *striking* marble after the stroke. He said that, if a straight line were drawn between the centres of the striking and object marbles, it would necessarily pass through their point of contact, and, if continued, would represent the path of the latter after the blow. In order to find the direction of the *striking* marble after the shock, he told him that he must imagine a tangent to the path of the *object* ball drawn from its centre, and then a line parallel to it, from the centre of the striking marble; the latter of which would be the required path.

Mr Seymour now inquired whether there was any other game of marbles at which they could amuse themselves.

"The game which we call '*lagging out*,'" replied the boy, "is amusing enough. It consists in striking your marble against the wall, and making it rebound, so as to hit any other marble that is placed at a certain distance from it, or to come within a span of it."

"I understand," said his father, "and, like *ring-taw*, it may be made subservient to our purpose of illustrating the doctrine of forces; although I think that the principle of *reflected motion* may be more readily explained by the rebounding ball."



Mr Seymour here took the elastic ball, and threw it obliquely against the wall, from which it rebounded in an opposite and equally oblique direction. He then sketched the annexed figure, and proceeded as follows:—"When I threw the ball against the wall B, in the direction A B, having struck it, it glanced off, making an angle, in its passage back again, equal to that which it made in its approach to the wall. If I draw the perpendicular B D, this fact will be rendered more apparent, and you will perceive that the angle A B D is equal to the angle C B D; the former is termed the *angle of incidence*, the latter the *angle of reflection;* and these angles, remember, are always equal, provided the ball under experiment be perfectly elastic."

"Do you mean to say," asked Tom, "that the more obliquely I throw the ball against the wall, the more obliquely it will rebound?"

"Exactly; that is my meaning; and see whether you cannot explain the fact, for it depends on the composition and resolution of the forces, a subject which I should hope you thoroughly understand."

Tom pondered for some time over the drawing, and at length observed that there was one difficulty which he could not immediately surmount.

"State your difficulty," said Mr Seymour.

He proceeded to observe that the force acting in the direction A B would certainly be resolved into two others, viz., one in the direction F B, and another in that of D B, "because," continued he, "these lines are the adjacent sides of the parallelogram, of which A B is the diagonal; and I well know that, whenever a force strikes obliquely, it is thus resolved."

"That is all very well explained," replied his father; "pray proceed."

"Now comes the difficulty," continued Tom; "for the force D B will of course be destroyed by the wall, and that represented by F B, which is the only one that can remain, would carry the ball to E."

"It certainly would do so," answered his father, "if the ball were perfectly devoid of elasticity; but remember that in consequence of this property, the force D B will be exchanged for one in an opposite direction, B D."

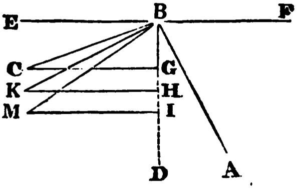
"I had entirely overlooked the elasticity," said Tom; "I now see my way clearly, for in that case there must be two forces acting in the directions B D, B E, which will, of course, drive the ball down the diagonal B C."

"Your demonstration is perfectly correct, my boy; and I think you will now admit that I could not have adduced a more beautiful instance of the composition and resolution of forces; for, in the first place, you resolve the diagonal force into two others, and then you recompound these to produce another diagonal one."

"But I think you told us that the angles of incidence and reflection were only equal when the rebounding body was perfectly elastic."

"Clearly so; the force D B must be exchanged for an equal one B D, or else the angle A B D cannot be equal to the angle D B C; but

I will render this fact still farther intelligible by another diagram. Let B, as in the former case, represent the wall upon which the imperfectly-elastic body impinges in the direction A B.—The force will of course be resolved into two others, viz., into D B and F B; the force D B, however, instead of being replaced by the opposite one B D, will now be represented by the shorter line B G; or that of B H or B I, according to the degree of elasticity. If we, therefore, complete the parallelogram, B C, B K, or B M will be the diagonal path of the body; making, as you perceive, the *angle of reflection*, D B C, greater than that of *incidence*, A B D; and where the body is perfectly inelastic, the force D B will be wholly destroyed, and, the force B E alone surviving, the body will be carried along the line B E. I have now," continued Mr Seymour, "explained to you the principal laws which govern those forces by which your ball or marbles are actuated. It is true that in practice you cannot expect the results should accurately coincide with the theory, because, in the first place, you cannot obtain marbles that are of equal density and elasticity, and of true figure; and in the next, there will be obstacles against which it is impossible to guard. The spinning of the marble will also have a material influence on its motion, as we have already discovered. In the game of billiards, where every obstacle is removed, as far as art can assist, the theory and practice are often strangely discordant. But we have dwelt sufficiently upon the subject; we will, therefore, return to the library, where I intend to exhibit an experiment in farther elucidation of the subject of collision."



The party accordingly proceeded on their return.

"I hope," said Mr Seymour, addressing himself to Mr Twaddleton, who was walking a few paces before him, "that the maiden ladies have not espied their vicar at a game of marbles; if they should, what a chuckling would there be at their next tea-party!"

"A fig for the spinsters!" exclaimed the vicar, as he hastily turned round, and arrested the progress of the party by his gesture. "You really speak, Mr Seymour, as though it were derogatory to my character to descend from the more austere pursuits to the simple but innocent amusements of youth. Believe me, Sir, that I am not so old as to have forgotten that I was once young."

"Once young! say, ever young. I only lately observed, when you were playing with your ball and marbles, that they appeared to possess the power of restoring the vigour of youth, like the apples of the Scandinavian goddess Iduna," observed Mr Seymour.

"And let me remind you," said the vicar, "that the Persian ambassador found even Agesilaus, the Lacedemonian monarch, riding on a stick."

"True; and the ambassadors of Henry the Fourth found him playing on the carpet with his children," said Mr Seymour. "If you fall back upon authority, I am quite ready to stand as surety for your honourable acquittal. I suppose you remember that Socrates was partial to the recreation of riding on a wooden horse, for which, as Valerius Maximus informs us, his pupil Alcibiades laughed at him."

"I care not who laughs at me," exclaimed the vicar: "'the world may laugh again, and I may live to do it kindness.' I enjoy the amusements of youth, and am as willing as was old Acestes to join their games.* I entirely agree with Dr Paley, in regarding the pleasure they afford as a striking instance of the beneficence of the Deity—

'Deus nobis hæc otia fecit,'

as Virgil has it."

The vicar proceeded in a strain of unusual animation—"Toys and games, my dear friend, have served to unbend the wise, to occupy the idle, to exercise the sedentary; † and, let me add, to unwrinkle the aged, for, by reviving the pleasant recollections of youth, what a cheering glow is cast over the evening of life!"

"And," interposed Mr Seymour, "I hope you will also add, to assist the young in acquiring knowledge, as well as to aid the sage in his labours to extend it; for I may here inform you that, by means of the soap-bubble, Faraday has succeeded in discovering new laws regarding the magnetic action of different gases; and you well know that to the kite Franklin was indebted for the consummation of his electrical discoveries."

"Very true," answered the vicar, "and not only did the kite enable him to discharge the thunder-cloud of its dangers, but its slender string, along which the lightning travelled safely to the earth, may be said to have shadowed forth the wonderful invention of the electric telegraph." ‡

"It might also be easily shown that the rudiments of the steam-engine first appeared in the form of a toy," observed the vicar.

"I suppose you allude to the *Eolipyle* of Hero of Alexandria?"

"Exactly so; and I have been told that our gas-lights were first suggested by boys filling the bowl of a tobacco-pipe with burning coal, and inflaming the vapour that issued from its tube—'*Sic parvis componere magnas.*' "

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* Æn., lib. v., ver. 719.

† Disraeli mentions, as a "*Curiosity of Literature*," a poem on the games of children, written by a Dutchman, of the name of Katz, in which the author attempts to make the sports of youth subservient to moral instruction.

‡ Professor Andrews lately announced, in the Chemical Section of the British Association at Glasgow, that he had decomposed water by atmospheric electricity, obtained by means of a properly-adjusted kite.

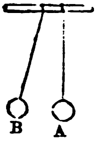
Mr Seymour here remarked that many of our valuable inventions were little else than cleverly-developed toys, separated from each other, he was ready to admit, by no inconsiderable chasm: thus did Humboldt witness on the shores of the Oronoco the native copper-coloured children of the forest amusing themselves by rubbing the dry, flat, shining reeds of some leguminous plant, for the purpose of causing them to attract fibres of cotton or bamboo; and he very philosophically exclaims, "How wide is the interval which separates this simple knowledge of electrical excitement by friction from the invention of the metallic conductor, the voltaic pile, and the magnetic telegraph!"

"All you have thus related," observed the vicar, "at least proves, what I am sure must afford you the highest satisfaction, that even these wild children of the forest entertained PHILOSOPHY IN SPORT."

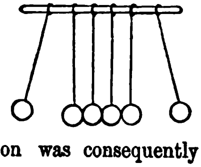
"Let me farther say, in illustration of my subject," continued Mr Seymour, "that the wide interval which separates the boyish sport on the shores of the Oronoco from the electrical messenger, is not more striking than is the transition from the fleeting shadow of the departing lover, playfully cast on the wall by the secret lamp of the Corinthian maid, to the photographic portrait now permanently stamped, with all the expressions of life, by the subtle and invisible spirit that dwells in the sunbeam."

"That is certainly a most marvellous invention," said the vicar. "It is just as if you looked into a glass, and left your face behind you:* talk not then to me of fairy tales, until you can show that their presiding genii can produce something equally wonderful."

The foregoing digression having been concluded, the party at once proceeded to the Lodge, where Mr Seymour produced a piece of apparatus for the purpose of exhibiting the experiment he had promised, in illustration of the doctrine of the collision of elastic bodies.



"Here are two ivory balls," said he, "suspended by threads; I shall draw one of them, A, a little on one side; now I let it go, it strikes, you see, against the other ball, B, and drives it off to a distance equal to that through which the first ball fell; but the motion of A is stopped, because, when it struck B, it received in return a blow equal to that it gave, and its motion was consequently



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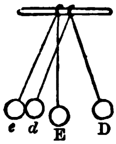
* Thermography has accomplished this, with other objects, and there is no doubt we do "leave our lathered faces," as Southey, in the "Doctor," says, every morning in the looking-glass.—ED.

destroyed. To extend the experiment, here are six ivory balls hanging in a row; I will draw the first out of the perpendicular and let it fall against the second; see! see! none of the balls appear to move except the last, which you perceive flies off as far as the ball fell. I should like to hear you explain this."

Tom observed that, when the first ball struck the second, it received a blow in return, which destroyed its motion; and that the second ball, although it did not appear to move, must have struck against the third, the reaction of which set it at rest; that the action of the third ball must have been destroyed by the reaction of the fourth, and so on, until motion was communicated to the last ball, which, not being reacted upon, flew off.

Mr Seymour commended Tom for his explanation; but he begged him to understand that such an effect only occurred when the balls were elastic; and he proceeded to exhibit the difference between elastic and inelastic bodies by another experiment. "When you raise one of these inelastic balls, made of clay, out of the perpendicular, and let it fall against the other, E, the action and reaction, not being augmented by the force of elasticity, are insufficient to destroy the motion of the former; only part of the motion D will, therefore, be communicated to E, and the two balls will move together to *d e*, which are less distant from the vertical line than the ball was before it fell."*



Before we close this chapter, we cannot resist the pleasure of informing our readers that Major Snapwell, in company with his legal adviser, had quitted Overton, for the purpose of making such preliminary arrangements as the purchase of an estate must necessarily require. It is not our intention to accompany them; nor shall we travel over the plains of parchment, nor wade through the rivers of ink, which separate the confines of verbal agreement and legal possession; but, claiming the prerogative of authors, we shall dip our wing in the cup of inspiration, and, by a single flourish of our feathered talisman, drive away a swarm of buzzing lawyers, and at once put the worthy major in the undisturbed possession of his newly-purchased mansion, and install him in one of Daw's most comfortable elbow-chairs, surrounded by all the luxuries of polished life.

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* This experiment shows why the carriages in the centre of a train are the safest.—ED.

CHAPTER XI.

IN the course of the ensuing week Mr and Mrs Seymour proceeded to offer their congratulations to the new proprietor of Osterley Park. On being ushered into the library, they were not a little surprised and startled by the loud voice of the major, who, addressing Mr Twaddleton, exclaimed,

"Never will I again suspect the antiquity of your rarities, nor question the rarity of your antiquities."

"Mr and Mrs Seymour," said the major, "welcome to Osterley Park. You find me, as usual, engaged with our friend in a learned controversy, and I begin to fear that my warmth may have offended him."

"Offended me!" exclaimed the vicar, "oh no. No, indeed, my dear Major Snapwell; a difference of opinion on an antiquarian subject may excite my regret, and in some cases, as in the present instance, awaken my pity; but it cannot offend me; it can never occasion any feeling like anger: that would be to visit the folly of others upon myself."

"What is the subject of your difference, gentlemen?" asked Mr Seymour.

"The evidences of Druidical rites, as deducible from certain cavities to be found in granitic rocks, and which have received the appellation of *rock basins*," replied the major.

"And of which," exclaimed Mr Twaddleton, "I have a most unquestionable specimen, collected by no less a geologist than the curator of the cabinet at Penzance, from that ancient metropolis of the Druids, *Carn-bre hill.*"

"I admit," said the major, "that I never before saw so perfect a specimen; it is as spheroidal internally as if it had been actually shaped by a turning-lathe."

"And yet, in spite of such evidence," replied the vicar, "you question its sacred origin, and deny its ever having been used as a pool of lustration!"

Mr Seymour here interposed.—"Upon a subject of purely historical difficulty, I might feel diffident in offering myself as an umpire between such learned antiquaries; but, as the origin of 'rock basins' involves a geological question, I will venture to deliver an opinion. Depend upon it, vicar, that you are maintaining a position that cannot be defended; these uncouth cavities, together with all the fancied statuary of Borlase (30), have never been shaped by any chisel but the tooth of time, nor have any artists but the elements been engaged in their formation."

"What say you to that, vicar?" triumphantly exclaimed the major.

"Oh, impiety, impiety!" cried the vicar;—

> 'Hostis habet muros, ruit alto a culmine Troja,'

as Maro has it. That such glorious monuments, which have so long braved the tempests, should fall under the hammer of these Philistines! Geology, Mr Seymour, is infidelity in masquerade; remember the mites in the Cheshire cheese, Mr Seymour, 'consider their ways, and be wise.'"

"Philistines as we are, in your opinion," replied his opponent, "our forges have served to sharpen your weapons against the attacks of infidelity."

"Come, come, gentleman," said Mr Seymour, "the continuance of this discussion can neither amuse nor instruct us. I have, however, some intelligence to communicate which will soothe every feeling of irritation. We have received a letter from Isabella Villers in answer to an invitation to Overton, and she graciously accepts it, and purposes being with us on Wednesday next."

The major was delighted, and conversed upon various points connected with the intended union of his nephew with that lady, which we do not think it necessary to relate in this place. The vicar and major shook hands, and it was proposed that they should dine at Overton Lodge the following day, and, as a specific overture that the major should visit the vicarage in his way, and again inspect some of the disputed antiquities of the reverend collector.

The following morning was occupied with the consideration of those different toys which are indebted for their operation to the pressure of the atmosphere.

"Tom," said Mr Seymour, "fetch hither your leathern sucker."

"John is, at this moment, amusing himself in the garden with the one which I brought with me from school," replied Tom.

"Then you shall construct another for yourself. Here is leather and string."

"This leather is too stiff; but I may, perhaps, make it answer the purpose by first soaking it."

Having allowed it to remain in water for a short time, the leather became sufficiently pliable for his purpose; he therefore cut it into a circular shape, and affixed a string through its centre. The juvenile party now hastened to the lawn, and, having once again dipped his newly-constructed sucker into the water, the ingenious boy placed it upon a stone, pressed down the leather with his foot, and succeeded in making it raise the weight.

"Well done, my boy! Now, then, explain the reason of the leather's adhesion to the surface, and of its being thus capable of retaining its hold, notwithstanding the gravity of the stone."

"In the first place," answered Tom, "the edges of the wet leather, from being closely pressed, stuck with sufficient firmness to the smooth surface of the stone, to resist the force of the string as I pulled it upwards; the consequence was, that a hollow was formed in the middle part of the leather; and, as that hollow place cannot contain any air, it is called a *vacuum*."

"Very well," replied his father, "so far you are right; but you have not informed me in what manner a *vacuum* acts in preventing the stone from quitting the leather."

"It makes it adhere to it by some kind of *suction*, but I confess that I do not exactly understand the subject."

"Then let us proceed cautiously and deliberately in the explanation. In the first place, you have said, and said correctly, that the edges of the leather adhere to the stone; but what is the nature of the power to which this adhesion is to be referred? I perceive you are puzzled by the question: attend, then, to my explanation. You must know that there exists a tendency in all bodies to adhere together, provided the contact of their surfaces be sufficiently perfect; this property is termed *cohesion*, or cohesive attraction, from the Latin word *cohæreo*, which I need not inform you signifies to *stick together*. The dry leather will not adhere to a rough surface, because, in that case, the contact cannot be rendered sufficiently perfect; but, when saturated with water, the interstices of the leather are filled with that fluid, and the inequalities of the surface, which must always prevent close contact, are removed. If two bodies, when placed together, be not sufficiently smooth, or polished, it will be vain to attempt their cohesion; since the particles will, in such a state, touch each other only in a few points; whereas, if well polished, the number of points of contact will be increased, and the cohesion become evident. It is for this reason that carpenters, when they intend to glue pieces of wood together, plane the surfaces perfectly smooth, before they apply the glue. In like manner, if two leaden bullets, having each a flat surface of a quarter of an inch in diameter, be scraped smooth, and then forcibly pressed together, they will cohere so strongly as to require the force of 100 lb. to separate them." (31.)

Tom here acknowledged that he had not before understood the reason of the leather's adhesion to the stone.

"Having, then, settled this point to your satisfaction," continued Mr Seymour, "let us proceed. Your idea of a *vacuum* being formed in the hollow part of the leather is perfectly correct: for, as you draw up the central part by the string, the hollow thus produced must necessarily be a *vacuum*, since the air cannot pass through the leather to supply it; in this state, therefore, the atmosphere presses upon the exterior of the leather, and like any other weight prevents its rising from the stone."*

Fanny and Louisa here expressed some surprise, on hearing of the weight of the atmosphere; the former observed that she did not feel any pressure from it. Their father explained the reason of their not being conscious of the weight, by informing them that their bodies contained air, which, by its elasticity, counteracted the pressure from without; but that, if it were possible to remove all the air which the body contained, the pressure of the atmosphere would not be counteracted; and the consequence would be, that we should be flattened like a pancake by its weight, which had been ascertained by experiment to be equal to fifteen pounds upon every square inch of surface, or as much as forty thousand pounds upon the body of a man of ordinary size.

"Until your explanation," said Tom, "I really believed that the leather adhered to the stone by some kind of *suction*, just as the back of my hand adheres to my lips whenever I place it to my mouth, and draw in my breath."

Mr Seymour here expressed a doubt whether his son was even yet a perfect master of the subject: he told him that there was no such operation in nature as *suction;* that it was merely a popular term to denote the action of the air upon a vacuum. "Your hand," said he, "adheres to your mouth, in consequence of your forming a vacuum within it, by forcibly drawing in your breath, and the resistance which is opposed to its removal arises entirely from the pressure of the atmosphere upon it. Many are the effects which may be explained upon a similar principle. I dare say you well remember the astonishment which you expressed at the force with which the limpets attached themselves to the rocks."

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* An ingenious method of fixing hooks to walls or window panes, by means of a hollow piece of india-rubber, has recently been patented.—ED.

"O yes, papa," exclaimed Louisa, "I well remember, when we walked on the sea-shore, that, on first touching the limpets, they appeared loose and moveable, but, before I had time to remove them, they fastened themselves as firmly as though they had been a part of the rock upon which they were fixed; how could that happen?"

Mr Seymour replied, that these sea insects possessed the power of converting their whole bodies into *suckers;* and he informed them, that many other animals were endowed with a similar faculty. He instanced the claws of the polypus, which are furnished with many such suckers, by means of which the animal is enabled to hold to whatever it attaches itself, with very considerable force.

"Have you never observed," continued Mr Seymour, "the security and ease with which flies frequently walk upon a smooth wall, or a pane of glass, or even along the ceiling, with their bodies downward?"

"To be sure," replied Tom; "but are not their legs provided with some sticky matter, which enables them to preserve themselves from falling?"

"That is a popular error, my dear: the fact is, that their feet are provided with little cups, or suckers, which they alternately exhaust and fill with air; by which means they are enabled to walk in every position, over the most slippery surface (32).* In like manner, the walrus, or seal, a painting of which you may remember to have seen in the Panorama of Spitzbergen, is capable of climbing the masses of slippery ice with perfect security."

"While upon this subject," said the vicar, "do not let us forget the *lamprey,*† of classical renown, which, by fastening itself to the helm so impeded the galley of Anthony, as to give to Augustus an advantage, which enabled him to invest the fleet and gain the victory of Actium. The fact is recorded by Pliny, and poetically described by the Greek poet Oppian."

At this moment Tom's stone fell from the sucker. Louisa inquired how it could have happened. "The circumstance is to be easily explained," said her father. "The atmosphere, by its pressure, ultimately forced its way through the edges of the sucker; its interior, therefore, became filled with air, and it consequently balanced the external weight, which had before confined it."

"I think," said the vicar, "that Tom must now surely understand the theory of the leathern sucker; what say you, my boy? Cannot you exclaim with Persius, '*Ego te Intus* et in *Cute* novi?'"

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* A few years ago, a man walking upon a platform, head downwards, was to be seen in London. He had plates, fitted with air-pumps attached to his feet.—ED.

† The lamprey has a mouth very like the boy's sucker, within which there is a tongue as rough as a file, with which it works upon any object to which it may attach itself.

"A quotation which I presume you would apply to the nature of the *cavity*, and the operation of the *leather*," observed Mr Seymour.

"Exactly," answered the vicar.

"Then never more protest against the vice of punning; for a more atrocious specimen of the *lusus verborum* was never sported by the most incorrigible Johnian; but, to your classical fancy, any object enclosed in a Latin shrine appears as a deity."

The vicar had just drawn up his person into a suitable attitude for combat, and would, no doubt, have defended himself against this unexpected attack with his usual address, had not a circumstance occurred which put an abrupt termination to the discourse.

"See! see!" exclaimed Louisa; "what can have happened? There is Jerry Styles, with a crowd of villagers, running towards us in the greatest state of agitation and alarm."

"Jerry Styles? It is, indeed, as you say, my faithful clerk," cried the vicar. "Bless me—bless me! what can have happened? Is the vicarage on fire? Has the old roof at last tumbled into the chancel?"

"Oh, sir!—oh, my dear sir!" vociferated the terrified servant of the church, whose blanched cheeks made his red nose appear like a volcano burning amidst a desert of snows; "Poor Tom Plank has blown the roof off his house, and is so dreadfully wounded that it is impossible for him to survive long, if, indeed, he be not already dead."

"How did it happen?" exclaimed several voices.

"From a *speriment!*—a *speriment!*—it all came from a *flossical speriment!*" replied the breathless clerk; "but pray, gentlemen, come directly to the village; for mercy's sake, gentlemen, don't delay a moment!"

The vicar and Mr Seymour instantly proceeded with the terrified Jerry Styles towards the house of the unfortunate "planer of deals;" they had not gone far before they met several other villagers, who informed them that Dr Doseall was in attendance upon the wounded man, and had pronounced him to be in the greatest danger.

On their arrival at the house, the roof of which they at once perceived had not suffered in the fray, they learned that Tom Plank had been engaged in some experiments for producing a *vacuum*, in the prosecution of his new scheme of propelling passengers through a tunnel;* and that, in firing a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen gases, he had neglected the usual precaution, and blown up his apparatus; the stop-cock had been unceremoniously expelled through the window, and, in its passage, had ungraciously flown in the face of its master, and left the traces of its indignation in the form of a very slight scratch upon his forehead: this accident, with a burn of the fingers, was the only personal injury he had sustained.

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* Tom Plank seems to have entertained a project which, to a certain extent, has been realised in the construction of the *Atmospheric Railway*, but which was very soon abandoned, since it was found impossible to render the works air-tight, or to prevent rats, toads, and other vermin, from being absorbed and drawn forwards into the machinery of the steam-engine. [It has since been proposed to send parcels by this method; nor does it appear improbable that some day our letters may thus be transmitted to the principal towns.—ED.]

"Come, come," said Mr Seymour, "no mischief has occurred, and the accident will, I trust, teach you more caution for the future. You are not the first adventurer who has *burned* his *fingers* by *bubble* speculations, and in vain attempts to *raise the wind*."

Dr Doseall, however, with a countenance of stern composure, and a portentous shake of the head, maintained that the accident was by no means so trifling as Mr Seymour appeared to suppose; and, in conformity with this view of the case, he had prudently bled his patient largely, and directed sundry mixtures and lotions, together with a *quantum sufficit* of laudanum, in order, as he said, "to keep down the swelling and puffing of the head;" although there were those present who were uncharitable enough to hint that the *swelling* and *puffing* related rather to the doctor's bill and character, than to the patient's pericranium.

After a short interval engaged in answering the numerous inquiries of the anxious spectators, the doctor, with an air of awful solemnity, advanced to the sufferer, and offered him a bolus of no ordinary size, upon the virtues of which he descanted in most touching language.

"Avaunt!" exclaimed Mr Seymour; "do you suppose that Tom Plank has the throat of the great dragon which the Indians believe to swallow the moon, and thus to produce the phenomena of lunar eclipses? Away with thy treacle and pipe-clay; there cannot be the least pretext for this parade of remedies. I warrant you that Dame Nature, unless she be put out of humour by your officious interference, will heal the scratch before to-morrow's sunrise."

The doctor, as our readers will readily imagine, was very justly incensed at this ex-professional interference. His first determination was to treat the matter as a joke, and to turn the laugh against the unmannerly intruder; but the abortive smile was strangled in its birth, and suffused the hue of death over his visage. Never did a countenance, in the focus of his blue window bottle, by candlelight, exhibit a more ghastly pallor; and we can scarcely predict what might have been the consequence, had he not instantly administered a consoling cordial to his nostrils: for be it known that the doctor took snuff in the same extravagant proportion as his patients took physic. Having by these means recovered his self-possession, he instantly seized his cane, and, waving it with as much dignity as Jove is said to brandish his thunder, he departed in deep dudgeon, which was betrayed by a snarl, not unlike that of a hungry dog who is unexpectedly despoiled of a savoury bone, and by a contortion of the face similar to that we have observed in a child who had unfortunately mistaken aloes for liquorice.

No sooner had the man of wrath and phials retreated from the field of blood, than Mr Twaddleton advanced to the suffering artist, deeming the moment of bodily fear as affording a favourable opportunity for an attempt to reclaim him from the error of his ways. "Tom Plank," said he, in a mild tone, "hadst thou given ear to the warning voice of thy spiritual pastor, and, instead of ridiculing his advice at the sixpenny club, hadst, like a true Christian and worthy parishioner, given heed unto it, thou wouldst not, at this time, have been placed in such bodily peril. Mr Seymour has consoled thee by his opinion; sincerely shall I pray that his judgment may be confirmed by the result, and that the visitation may have a salutary influence upon thy future conduct. Quit the pursuit of these bubbles, and leave wiser men to investigate the secrets of nature; let me exhort thee to return to thy craft, sow where thou canst reap; we cannot have figs from thorns, nor grapes from thistles; remember the proverb, 'An emmet may work its heart out, but can never make honey.' One word more and I have done—suffer not the artist whose profit it is to furnish thee with materials, to flatter and cajole thee—'The dog wags his tail, not for thee, but for thy bread.'"

As the party left the house, they met Mrs Seymour, with Tom and Louisa, whose looks sufficiently testified the anxiety they had suffered.

"Is it all over? Is he dead?" asked Mrs Seymour.

"No, no; he is quite safe; it was an extremely slight accident, although Doseall wished us to believe that it was likely to terminate in some dreadful manner. The vicar thinks that it may prove the means of driving science *out* of Tom Plank's head, and I intend to make it subservient to driving it still farther *into* ours."

"What do you mean?" cried Tom.

"I mean that it was an extremely apposite accident for illustrating the subject upon which we were engaged at the moment of interruption."

"This is the second accident, then," observed Louisa, "that will have served us in our scientific studies. What a philosopher," continued she, "must Dr Doseall become, if he profit by every accident he witnesses!"

"Knowledge, my dear girl, is not promoted by the opportunity of seeing, but by the faculty of skilfully observing, and reflecting upon what we see; were it otherwise, the merit of a traveller might be at once estimated by the number of shoes he had worn out. Whenever, therefore, you hear of a discovery having been made *by accident*, do not, on that account, depreciate the merits of its author. It is certainly true, that many an important truth has been brought to light from some casual observation (33), but the dexterity with which such observation was applied constitutes the merit of the discoverer."

"For that remark I tender you my best thanks," exclaimed the vicar: "if I might be allowed such a figure of speech, I should say that you have dexterously shot your arrow into the *bull's-eye*, or '*Acu tetigisti*,' as Plautus expresses it. If the prosperity of a jest lies in the ear of him who hears it, surely the right comprehension of phenomena must be determined by the faculties of him who observes them."

"Without doubt," answered Mr Seymour; "treasures of wisdom, like the wealth of the miser, often lie concealed under the least attractive exterior; and objects which the common herd pass by as valueless are recognised by the observer, whose faculties have been sharpened by discipline, as stores of knowledge."

"Well, but to shew in what manner the accident of Tom Plank bears upon the subject under discussion:—He had ignorantly fired a quantity of oxygen and hydrogen gases in a tin vessel; the conseqence of the combustion was the immediate formation of a *vacuum*: and what happened? Why, the pressure of the external air, not being any longer balanced by elastic matter in the interior of the apparatus, crushed it with violence, as any other enormous weight might have done; and so ended the accident, which report magnified into a most awful catastrophe."

As the party proceeded on their way home, they continued to discourse on the subject of the air's pressure.

"If the atmosphere exerts so enormous a pressure, and has so much weight," observed Louisa, "it is strange that it should not fall down on the earth."

Mr Seymour replied, "that the air was a peculiar fluid, which, from its elastic properties, was distinguished by the term of an *elastic fluid*, the particles of which were too far distant from each other to exert any cohesive attraction amongst themselves."

"But I suppose," said Tom, "that it gravitates or is attracted by the earth; what then can be the reason, as Louisa says, that it does not fall, like any other body, to the ground?"

"And so it actually does," replied Mr Seymour: "the lower stratum of the atmosphere rests upon the ground, but the strata above it do not fall, because they are supported by the particles beneath them, in the same manner as the water at the surface of a basin is supported by that at the bottom: the only difference in these two cases arises from the one being an elastic, and the other an inelastic fluid; so that the air after compression resumes its original dimensions; and since the atmosphere, by the action of gravity, is always in a state of compression, so is it always by virtue of its elasticity endeavouring to expand itself."

"If, then, the force of gravity were diminished," observed Louisa, "the air would become much lighter, and I suppose that is the true reason of its being so much less dense in the upper regions."

"Scarcely," replied her father. "Have you forgotten the explanation* which I lately gave you, of the diminution in the weight of bodies at a distance from the earth's surface?"

"I recollect it perfectly," exclaimed Tom; "and it explained to us the reason that a marble fell from the top of a house, and from the ball of St Paul's, with the same velocity."

"And yet I am quite sure," said Louisa, "that I have lately read an account of the air being so extremely light upon the top of a high mountain as to affect the breath and occasion great uneasiness." (34.)

"I do not deny the fact, my dear: I only question your explanation of it. Can it not, think you, be accounted for upon some other principle than that of the diminished force of gravity?"

Louisa was unable to suggest any other probable reason.

"The fact, then," said the father, "is simply this: since the air is elastic, or capable of yielding to pressure, so, of course, the lower parts must be more dense, or in a greater state of compression, than those which are above them. In a pile of fleeces of wool, are not the lower fleeces pressed together by the weight of the superior ones, and do they not lie light and loose in proportion as they approach the uppermost fleece, which receives no external pressure, and is confined merely by the force of its own gravity?"

"Clearly," said Louisa.

"Well, then, we will suppose, for example, that the whole column of the atmosphere was divided into a hundred parts, and that each of these parts weighed an ounce; would not the earth, and all things on its surface, be, in such a case, pressed upon with the whole hundred ounces?"

"No one can deny that," said Tom.

"The lowest stratum of air," continued Mr Seymour, "would be pressed upon by the ninety-nine ounces above it; the next by ninety-eight; and so on, until we arrived at the ninety-ninth stratum from the bottom, which would, of course, be subjected to no more than one ounce of pressure, or to the weight of the last and highest stratum."

The children were perfectly satisfied with this simple explanation; and Tom inquired whether, for the same reason, the water at the bottom of the sea must not be very dense, and unlike that we are accustomed to observe on the surface; his father, however, corrected this notion, by stating that water, not being, like air, elastic and compressible, would not suffer any material diminution in volume, although pressed even by the enormous weight of the superincumbent ocean. (35.)

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* See page 24.

"I have before alluded to the relative compressibility of air and water, and the present appears a good opportunity for proving the fact by an amusing experiment. See! here are the '*Bottle Imps,*' vicar, which you may remember I promised to introduce to your respectful notice," said Mr Seymour. "In this jar of water, carefully closed, as you may perceive, by parchment, are two little enamelled figures, which shall be made to rise and fall, by alternately pressing upon and removing the hand from the cover: thus."

"Why, the spirit of Simon Magus must surely possess thee!" exclaimed the vicar.

The children, as may be readily imagined, were much astonished at so singular an effect, and expressed much anxiety to be informed by what mechanism it was produced. Their father accordingly proceeded with the following explanation.

"I have here," said he, "a figure exactly similar to those in the bottle, which we will now examine. You will observe, that in its centre there is a cavity terminating in a small orifice in the lower part; this cavity may be made to contain any quantity of air, so as to give the required buoyancy to the figure: now mark!—I press my hand upon the parchment cover, and the figure, you perceive, descends; I now remove the pressure, and see, it immediately reascends. The water in the bottle, as I have told you, is incompressible; when, therefore, I press upon the surface, it rises into the interior of the figure, and consequently, by compressing the air into a less space, renders it less buoyant; but no sooner is the hand removed, than the enclosed air resumes its former volume, and expels the intruding water; in consequence of which the figure regains its former lightness, and reascends. Do you understand me?" asked Mr Seymour.

"Perfectly," said Tom, "and many thanks for the explanation:" and in this opinion did the whole party concur.

"Well, then," continued Mr Seymour, "you will now understand the use of the air-bladder in fish, for it is constructed upon a precisely similar principle. When the fish desires to descend, it presses upon the bladder by means of its muscles, and thus condenses the included air into a smaller volume." *

"I now also perceive why the water at the bottom of the sea cannot be much more dense than that on the surface; but, if we could dig a pit to the centre of the earth, the air, in that case, would be highly dense, because, unlike water, it is compressible," said Tom.

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* In the cod-fish the air-bladder is familiarly called the sound.

"The density of the air," replied his father, "would, undoubtedly, materially increase as we descended. It has been calculated that at the distance of thirty miles below the surface, the air would have the same density as water; and at the depth of forty-two miles, that of quicksilver; while at the centre it would be more solid than any substance of which we have an idea, for its density would be thousands of millions of times greater than that of mercury."

Mr Seymour then informed his young pupils, that after the lesson they had just received they would never again be puzzled by the motions of the barometer, which had so often excited their wonder.

"As the quicksilver is contained in a closed tube, I do not exactly understand how the air can act upon it; and if the tube were not closed, it would of course run out from its weight," observed Louisa.

"You are altogether in error," said her father. "In the first place," he continued, "I will show you that the bulb at the lower extremity of the tube is open, in order that the quicksilver may freely communicate with the atmosphere, upon which, indeed, its action entirely depends; while the upper space is a perfect vacuum, so as to obviate any counteracting pressure. As to the quicksilver running out, have you so soon forgotten that the air presses upon every body on the surface of the earth, in the proportion of about fifteen pounds upon every square inch? Now it is from this circumstance that the column of quicksilver is sustained in the tube, the ascent and descent of which thus indicates the varying pressure of the atmosphere; so that, when the barometer falls, we know the air presses less heavily upon the earth, and the contrary when it rises."

"That I understand: but what can cause the pressure of the air to vary at different times?" asked Tom.

"Cannot you imagine the atmosphere to be an airy ocean, and to be therefore thrown into enormous waves, so that we may sometimes have a longer column of air above us than at other times? This is one explanation; there may be other causes not so intelligible," answered Mr Seymour. "But enough of this for the present. Now, before we quit the subject of the air's elasticity, let us consider the philosophy of the *pop-gun;* an amusement with which, I have no doubt, you are well acquainted."

"Indeed I am, papa; but do you allude to the quill, or to the wooden pop-gun?"

"The principle in both is the same: tell me, therefore, the origin and nature of the force which enables you to shoot your pellet to so considerable a distance."

"It depends upon the action of the air," replied Tom.

"Undoubtedly; but your answer is too general; I wished you to state, in precise terms, the changes which the air undergoes upon this occasion. You first ram in your pellet to the further end of the tube, do you not?"

"To be sure; and then I drive in a second pellet, and, on forcing this forward, the first flies out with prodigious force."

"Very well: now examine what takes place. On propelling forward your second pellet, you condense the air which is enclosed between the two, until its elastic force becomes so great as to overcome the friction of the first pellet; thus released, the air expands with considerable force, and imparts a rapid motion to the pellet."

"I have frequently heard of the air-gun," said Louisa; "I suppose it depends upon a similar principle."

"It does; and it affords a very striking example of the surprising force which air is capable of exerting, when condensed to a considerable degree; for, by means of this instrument, bullets may be propelled with a force very nearly equal to that of gunpowder."

"It is a curious fact," observed the vicar, "that, although the air-pump is a modern invention, yet the air-gun, which is so nearly allied to it in the construction of its valves and condensing syringe, should have existed long antecedent to it; for it is recorded that an air-gun was made for Henry IV. by Marin, of Lisieux, in Normandy, as early as 1408; and another was preserved in the armoury at Schmetau, bearing the date of 1474."

"But the air-gun of the present day," said Mr Seymour, "is very different from that which was formerly made, and which, like the pop-gun, discharged but one bullet, and that after a long and tedious process of condensation; while it is now made to discharge five or six without any visible variation of force, and will even act upon a dozen, but with decreasing effect."

"I feel very curious to learn something more about this air-gun," said Tom.

"There is a reservoir for the condensed air," replied Mr Seymour, "which is secured by a nicely-constructed valve, and which is made to open by pulling the trigger of the gun, so that a portion only of the air is disengaged, which, rushing into the barrel, gives motion to the ball."

"But how is the condensed air introduced into the reservoir?" asked Tom.

"By means of a condensing syringe," replied his father; "but I will take an opportunity of exhibiting the instrument in operation."

The reader will be pleased to recollect that the major agreed to pay a passing visit to the vicarage! it now becomes our duty to record what happened upon that memorable occasion; and we, perhaps, cannot better represent the nature of the discussion that took place than by relating the account, as it was given by the belligerent parties themselves, in conversation with Mr Seymour.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr Seymour, "is it peace or war? I trust you have amicably adjusted all your differences."

"Upon my word," answered the vicar, "I have just reason to complain of the major's unjustifiable scepticism upon points that are perfectly unquestionable."

"You continue then to smart under the major's stinging criticisms, '*majore sub hoste.*' There is a Latin pun for your consolation," said Mr Seymour.

"The vicar alludes, I suppose," said the major, "to the doubt I expressed respecting the authenticity of his leathern money?"

"That is one of the many subjects upon which, I must say, you have betrayed a deficiency in historical knowledge. Seneca informs us that there was anciently stamped money of leather; and the same thing was put in practice by Frederick II. at the siege of Milan; to say nothing of an old tradition amongst ourselves, that, in the confused times of the barons' wars, the same expedient was practised in England."

"You strangely mistake me," replied the major; "I never questioned the truth of these historical statements; I know full well that numerous substances have, at different times, and in different countries, been adopted in exchange, as conventional representatives of property. I have already stated that cattle were employed as the earliest measure of value.* We find, for instance, in Homer, that the golden armour of Glaucus was valued at a hundred, and that of Diomedes at ten oxen.† Among the Indians, *cowries*, or small shells, are used; and the Abyssinians employed salt, bricks, and beads for this very purpose. The ancient Britons, according to Cæsar, circulated iron rings as money. The Hollanders, we know, coined great quantities of pasteboard in the year 1754; and Numa Pompilius certainly made money both of wood and leather."

"And yet you doubt the authenticity of my leathern money, which I am fully persuaded was coined in 1360, by John, king of France, who, having agreed to pay our Edward the Third the sum of 3,000,000 golden crowns for his ransom, was so reduced as to be compelled to a coinage of leather for the discharge of his household expenses."

"I have only questioned the authenticity of that particular specimen which I saw in your cabinet," replied the major; "and so must any person who views it through a medium unclouded by prejudice. I will stake my whole library to a horn-book that our friend Mr Seymour will agree with me in pronouncing it a fragment of the heel of an old shoe; let him observe the perforation, and say, if he can, that it has not been produced by a nail or peg. But really, my dear Mr Twaddleton, you have forced me, much against my inclination, into this controversy."

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* Hence *Pecunia* from *Pecus*, and *Opes* quasi *Oves*.

† The term CAPITAL, in its original signification, expressed the rude enumeration of the stock by the HEADS of the animals of which it was composed. We derive the word '*Calculation*,' from that rudimental period, when pebbles (*calculi*) were used, as now, amongst savages, to facilitate the practice of counting.

"Very good, Sir! very good! the heel of an old shoe, forsooth! But I thank you, Major Snapwell," exclaimed the vicar with some warmth; "I thank you, Sir. Your assertion, while it evinces your own want of historical information, establishes, beyond doubt, the authenticity of my treasure, and the triumph of my opinion."

"Assuredly," said Mr Seymour, with a wicked smile. "I dare say there may be numerous holes in this leathern coin; for many have been the antiquaries who have, doubtless, pinned their faith upon it."

"Psha, psha!" cried the vicar: "for once, at least, Mr Seymour, let me entreat you to be serious; the subject, Sir, is important, and merits your respect. It is from that very hole that I am enabled to identify the coin; yes, major, from that very hole, which you affect to despise, I am enabled to derive its principal claim to antiquity. Are we not expressly informed that the leathern money of John of France had a little nail of silver driven into it?"

"Well, then," continued the major, "what say you to that tell-tale stitch, which I so unfortunately picked out with my penknife?"

"Admirable ingenuity! most refined sophistry! provoking perversion!" exclaimed the vicar. "It is really amusing to observe the address with which the prejudiced observer distorts every fact to his own advantage. Why, bless me, Sir, that stitch is strong enough to drag fifty such opponents out of the slough of unbelief."

"Do explain yourself," said Mr Seymour.

"Explain myself! the stitch speaks for itself, Sir. Were not these leathern coins strung together in different numbers to facilitate payments? For you will admit that it would have been extremely inconvenient to have coined single pieces of leather of different denominations. But stop, Sir, stop; look at this, look at it, major, with care and attention. That," said the vicar, as he drew a small coin out of his waistcoat pocket, with an air of imperturbable gravity and self-satisfaction, "is a current halfpenny, in lead, of James II.; and if your eyes are not hoodwinked by prejudice, you may probably perceive a piece of copper in its centre, which, we are told, was thus introduced for the purpose of rendering the currency lawful."

The dinner was announced before the conclusion of the discussion; and as the reader will probably agree with us in thinking that a question of such grave historical importance ought not to be decided without due care and deliberation, we shall afford the disputants a reasonable time for reflection, and put an end to the chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

WE should have supposed, after the instructive accident related in the foregoing chapter, and the excellent advice it had elicited from the vicar, that Tom Plank would have desisted from his experimental vagaries, and that the doctor, at all events, would never have consented to become the subject of them; but there are those whom experience can never teach, nor failure ever discourage.

The very next morning after the catastrophe recorded in our preceding chapter, as the vicar was taking his early walk along Forest-lane, gathering primroses and wild flowers, his placid and contemplative frame of mind was abruptly disturbed by the sudden vision of a dragon, vomiting flames of fire from its jaws, with a troop of dogs barking and yelling at its heels. As it drew nearer, the well-known person of the village doctor presented itself to his perplexed vision, mounted on its back, and shrouded in vapours, which the imagination of the vicar suggested could be no other than the pestilential effluvia from the nostrils of the unknown and frightful monster: but there was little time to allow his reason to correct the fallacies of his senses; in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—an explosion shook the air, while the ground beneath his feet trembled like an aspen-leaf: shot, as thick as hail, but in aspect far less pure, poured down in all directions, while a thunderbolt, whizzing past his ears, safely deposited itself in the adjoining bank. As soon as the fumes had passed away, and the vicar's self-possession been sufficiently restored, the prostrate doctor was seen struggling in a mass of mud, like a fly in one of his own electuaries, excepting, of course, a conserve of roses, and who, on removing the "*black dose*" from his mouth, was audibly heard to denounce the carelessness of his man Spindle, who, as he believed, had either screwed down the safety-valve, or, like the prince on the enchanted horse, in the Arabian tale, had ignorantly turned round the wrong peg in his flying locomotive. The unhappy doctor then, in a strain of humble lamentation, proceeded to state that the carriage, or "*steam velocipede*," had been designed by the ingenious Tom Plank, and that, while it was designed to carry him forward to visit his distant patients, it was, at the same time, so constructed as to actuate a revolving movement for the formation of his pills. It was now evident, that the shower of bullets which had followed the explosion, consisted of pills, and that the thunderbolt was no other than the rebellious pestle, which had taken advantage of the general confusion to bolt from its lazy and sleeping partner, the mortar, with whom it had so incessantly, but unfairly laboured, for the benefit of Doseall and suffering humanity.

In recounting this singular scene to the Seymour family, the vicar, although, as he said, he could not overlook the moral it afforded, declared that he was far from wishing to vindicate such an act of rebellion as the pestle had displayed upon the occasion. "It is, however, no less true," continued he, "that in the intercourse of life, whenever parties associate for mutual benefit, unless the division of labour and responsibility be equitably adjusted, the oppressed or weaker members will naturally seize a favourable opportunity for escaping from the unjust compact."

"From which remark," said Mr Seymour, "I presume you appear as counsel in the cause of the absconding pestle *versus* the inert and lazy mortar—if so, I think it will afford my boy Tom an excellent opportunity for applying the science he has lately acquired in justification of the said defendant. He will, I am sure, readily convince you that in the compact between the mortar and pestle there did not exist the least inequality of labour. Now, Tom, have you not learnt that action and reaction are equal, and in opposite directions, and, therefore, that for every blow of the pestle, the mortar responds, and in return gives one equal in force?"

"Certainly," replied Tom; "and if, in the encounter, the one suffers more than the other, as when my master slapped my face, it must arise, as you clearly explained, from the different feeling of the bodies brought into conflict." *

"But, in the case before us, that plea cannot be sustained, for the parties were alike as brazen and unfeeling as any that ever came before a jury; the mortar, therefore, did, in its quiet way, furnish just as great an amount of labour, and perform the same amount of work, as the more assuming and bustling pestle; and the verdict must go for the defendant."

The major was much amused by this whimsical pleasantry, observing that philosophical principles were never more vividly and permanently stamped upon the memory of young persons than by the aids of the imagination; which may be aptly compared to the good fairy of romance, who voluntarily performed the drudgery of the housewife, without her participation, or even her knowledge.

"I quite concur in that opinion, and have always endeavoured to act upon it," said Mr Seymour; "but the late catastrophe also offers an instructive lesson, which we must not pass over without some remarks. It teaches us that a person deeply imbued with a passion for invention is like the gamester, whom losses and misadventure only stimulate to wilder schemes of speculation, while it also proves that the only sure and safe path to the accomplishment of a scientific design is to make ourselves intimately acquainted with all the bearings and combinations of those principles upon which we depend for our success." In the instructive case which has called forth these remarks, Tom Plank had overlooked the fact that water, brought into contact with red-hot iron, undergoes decomposition, and, instead of steam, generates inflammable gas—his plan being to produce steam by the projection of a minutely-divided stream of water upon an iron heater, as originally proposed by a person of the name of Payne. The reader has been made acquainted with the failure, and he is now informed as to the reason of it.

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* See page 46.

CHAPTER XIII.

"TOM," said his father, "bring me a saucer with some hot water, a piece of soap, and a tobacco-pipe. I have promised to teach John the art of blowing soap-bubbles."

Tom immediately proceeded to execute his commission, and shortly rejoined the party on the lawn, bringing with him all the necessary implements for bubble-blowing. John, under the direction of his brother, made the lather; and Mr Seymour, turning towards the elder children, asked them whether they understood the philosophy of the operation they had just witnessed; they were, however, unable to return a satisfactory answer, and their father, therefore, proceeded as follows:—

"Most liquids, by agitation, exhibit the appearance of froth in consequence of the escape of the air in small bubbles, which had been forced into them by the operation. If, however, the liquid be viscid and tenacious, like soap and water, the air is, as it were, imprisoned in the mass, producing the appearance which is commonly called *lather*."

Louisa here inquired, "Whether the air did not escape with more or less readiness, according to the degree of resistance it met with in the liquid?"

"I thank you," said Mr Seymour, "for having so kindly assisted me in the explanation."

Louisa smiled at this mark of her father's approbation, and Mr Seymour proceeded,—"It is on that very account that spirit, after it has been shaken, so soon regains its transparency: for, in consequence of the superior lightness of that fluid, and the little cohesion which subsists between its particles, the air makes a rapid escape. In like manner we may account for the spongy appearance which gives such superiority to our bread: in that case, the air disengaged during the fermentation of the dough cannot escape through so viscid a mass: it therefore remains, and thus produces the eyes or bubbles which you may always observe in every well-baked loaf."

"See, papa!" exclaimed Tom, "the bubbles which John has blown in the lather are not round, but angular figures—they appear to be like the hexagons which we used to cut out for our *papyro-plastics*."

"They are certainly hexagonal," replied Mr Seymour; "and the form arises from the pressure of the bubbles upon each other. The same appearance is to be seen in the pith of vegetables, when examined by the microscope, and is the result of the general reaction of the solid parts upon each other; but let us proceed to blow some bubbles. Plunge the bowl of the tobbaco-pipe into the lather."

Tom obeyed his father's directions, and blowing through the stem produced a bubble.

"See! see!" cried Louisa, "what a beautiful bubble! but there is a quantity of soap hanging to its under part."

"I will take it off with my finger," said Mr Seymour.

"There it goes!" exclaimed Tom.

"What beautiful colours it displays! as bright and gaudy as those of the rainbow!" observed his sister.

"It has burst!" cried Louisa.

"Ah! my dear children," murmured the vicar, with an air of pensive gravity, "'*Tenues secessit in auras*,' as the poet has it. Even thus it is with all the full-blown bubbles of our fancy, raised by the breath of hope: the moment they appear most vivid and promising to our imagination, they vanish 'into air, into thin air,' like the gaudy and unsubstantial soap-bubble you have just witnessed: but proceed to blow another."

"There is one!" exclaimed Louisa;—"see, it is of an oblong shape, like an egg!—there it goes!—but I declare it is now perfectly round!!—what can be the reason of its changing its figure?"

"I am glad you have asked that question, because my answer will serve to illustrate an important property of air, and which, indeed, is common to all fluids. While the upper part of the bubble was attached to the bowl of the pipe, its gravity, being resisted, drew it into an elliptical form; but the instant it was detached, the contained air pressed equally in all directions, and the bubble, in consequence, became a perfect sphere."*

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* A scientific friend observed to the author, that, as the globe possesses less surface than any other figure of equal capacity, it is of all forms that which is best calculated to allow the closest approximation of the particles of soap and water; and as there must exist amongst such particles a strong cohesive tendency, after having been forcibly stretched out, as it were, by the air blown into the bubble, it follows that, did no other cause operate, the bubble

"I do not exactly understand what you mean by 'pressing equally in all directions.'"

"The expression is surely sufficiently intelligible. Did you not learn in our conversation of yesterday, that air has weight, and exerts a pressure as much upwards as downwards and laterally? Were this not the case, how could the air in the interior of our bodies counteract the pressure of the atmosphere? The form of the bubble proves the same fact in a different way; for, had the air in its cavity pressed more in any one direction than in another, the bubble could not have been round, or, to speak more correctly, a sphere."

"What are you musing about?" cried the vicar, who had observed the attention of the boy riveted upon the bowl of the tobacco-pipe: "I am sure, from your countenance, that some circumstance is puzzling you."

"You are right, my dear Sir. I was just then thinking how it can possibly happen that the bubble should not have a hole in its upper part; for, while I am blowing it up, there must, of course, be a communication between my mouth and its interior, or else how could the air pass into it?"

"True," said his father; "but the act of throwing it off from the bowl of the pipe will unite this breach; for there exists a strong cohesive attraction between the attenuated particles of the lather; you will, therefore, perceive that, on this account, the bubble will be more readily and securely separated by a lateral than a perpendicular motion of the pipe."

"I wish," said Tom, "that I could discover some method of preventing their bursting so soon, for there is scarcely time to examine them before they vanish. What can be the cause of their short duration?"

"Consider, my dear boy, the frailty of their structure, and I think that the precarious tenure of their existence will cease to astonish you; indeed, the wonder is, that they should endure so long. The film of which they consist is inconceivably thin,* so that the slightest impulse will be apt to rupture it; besides which, there must be a considerable evaporation going on from their surface, while the contraction of the contained air, from change of temperature, must also tend to limit their duration. You must likewise remember that the soap-lather will have a tendency to gravitate towards the depending part of the bubble, and, consequently, by quitting the upper portion,

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would assume the spherical form; in other words, that the effort of all the several particles of the mass to approach each other as closely as possible must result in the assumption of the spherical form. The same law governs the formation of the drops of water as they fall from the clouds, sparkle from the fountain, or glisten on the dewy foliage; and to avail ourselves of a beautiful instance of the alliance of science with poetry, we must be allowed to quote the following charming lines of Rogers:—

"That very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source—
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course."

* Not exceeding the two-millionth part of an inch.

to render it of still greater tenuity. This last effect might, perhaps, be obviated, in some measure, by giving a rotatory motion to the bubble around its axis; but this, again, would accelerate the evaporation, which, after all, is the principal cause of the shortness of its duration; so that, unless this latter effect could be remedied, I despair of suggesting any expedient by which the frail existence of our airy structure could be protracted. You must, therefore, seek, from a succession of bubbles, the prolongation of an amusement which no single one can afford you."

"And could not the evaporation be prevented?" asked Tom.

"If the bubble were blown in a glass vessel, and the latter immediately closed after the operation, it would remain for some time; I remember having once preserved a bubble in this manner for a very considerable period."

Tom, however, did not appear to relish this scheme; as, he said, the great sport arose from watching the movements of the floating bubble; the boy, accordingly, determined to pursue the amusement in the usual manner. His father, however, observed, that by mixing a solution of isinglass with the soap-lather, larger,* as well as more lasting bubbles might be blown; and Tom accordingly determined to make the experiment.

During this dialogue, little John had succeeded, for the first time, in launching the airy bauble. Imagination always tinges the objects of our first efforts with brilliant tints; no wonder, therefore, that John, with a shout of ecstasy, should have pronounced it to have been the most beautiful bubble he had ever seen: in truth, the sun was shining brightly, and the colours thus produced very justly excited the admiration of all present.

"I cannot understand the cause of these beautiful colours," said Louisa.

Mr Seymour expressed a fear that, in their present state of knowledge, they would be scarcely able to understand the explanation he should afford them. "But," said he, "I believe you know that a ray of light is divisible into seven colours, and that, when it passes through certain media, or is reflected from certain surfaces, this division is effected, and the various colours produced (36): this is remarkably the case where light falls upon a transparent film of great tenuity, which, instead of reflecting white light, sends forth colours of great beauty, which, as they are produced by thinness, are called the '*colours of thin plates*.' The film of the soap-bubble is amongst the latter bodies; but I must refer you, for further information upon this subject, to Sir David Brewster's 'Treatise on Optics.'"

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* Sir David Brewster states, that by mixing a little sugar with the solution of soap, we may blow bubbles of very large size, and which will exhibit the coloured zones in a very perfect manner.

"Now, Tom," said his father, "fetch your squirt, for we have not yet finished our inquiry into the effects of the air's pressure."

The squirt was produced; but it was out of repair: for, on attempting to fill it with water, the instrument entirely failed in the performance of its office.

"I see the defect," said Mr Seymour, "which a little string will easily remedy."

A piece of string was instantly produced from that universal depôt, the breeches-pocket of a schoolboy. Mr Seymour said he should bind a portion of it around the end of the piston.

"What do you mean by the *piston?*" inquired Tom.

"The rod which moves up and down in the cylinder, or tube; and, unless its end fits so exactly as to prevent the admission of air, it is clear that the squirt cannot draw any water. It was for the purpose of making this part fit tightly that I wanted the string, and you will now perceive that the instrument is ready for use:—fetch me a vessel of water."

Tom soon produced the water, and, on placing it on the ground, requested that he might be allowed to fill the squirt. This he accordingly effected without difficulty, and, on pressing down the handle, he projected a stream of water to a considerable distance.

"I perceive," said Tom, "that the stream describes a curve, like my ball."

"To be sure; it is under the joint influence of the same forces, viz., those of projection and gravity. But explain the operation of the squirt."

"As soon as I raised the piston, an empty space was left in the lower part of the cylinder, which I suppose would have remained as a *vacuum*, had not the water rushed into it."

"And why did the water rush into it?"

Tom hesitated.

"Was it not, think you, owing to the pressure of the atmosphere upon the surface of the water? When you raised the piston, the air above it was also raised, and ultimately driven out by the force of the ascending piston; and since the air could not find any entrance from below as long as the point was under the water, the interior of the squirt would necessarily have remained quite empty, or have been a vacuum, had it not been for the weight of the atmosphere, which, not having any counteracting pressure, drove the water into the tube, and thus filled it; and which, by pressing down the piston, you again expelled with considerable force."

"Your explanation," cried Louisa, "is so clear and intelligible, that I feel quite confident I could now explain any machine that owes its action to the exhaustion of the air, and the pressure of the atmosphere."

"If that be your belief," said Mr Seymour, "I will not lose a moment in putting your knowledge to the test.—Tom, do you run into the house, and fetch hither the kitchen bellows."

The bellows were produced, and Louisa, having been desired by her father to explain the manner in which they received and expelled the air, proceeded as follows:—"Upon raising the upper from the under board, the interior space of the bellows is necessarily increased, and immediately supplied with an additional quantity of air, which is driven into it by the pressure of the atmosphere; when, by pressing down the upper board, it is again expelled through the iron tube or nosle."

"To be sure," said Tom, "in the same manner that the water was expelled from my squirt, when I pushed down the handle."

"So far you are quite correct," said Mr Seymour; "but you have not yet told us the use of the hole* in the under-board, and which is covered, as you perceive, with a moveable flap of leather: it is termed a valve, or '*wind-clap*.'"

"That," replied Tom, "is for the purpose of admitting the air, when we raise up the board."

"Exactly so; and also to prevent the air from passing out again, when you press it down. I wish to direct your attention particularly to this contrivance, because, simple as it may appear, its action will teach you the general nature of a valve. Without it, the operation of filling the bellows with air would have been so tedious as to have destroyed the utility of the instrument; for the air could, in that case, have only found admission through the nosle, and that, again, would have been attended with the additional disadvantage of drawing smoke and other matter into its cavity; when, however, you raise up the board, the air, by its external pressure, opens the wind-clap inwards, and thus finds an easy entrance for itself; and when you press the board downwards, the air, thus condensed, completely shuts the valve, and, its return through that avenue being prevented, it rushes out through the tube."

The children were much pleased with the simplicity of this invention, and Tom inquired of the vicar who first thought of it.

"We are informed by Strabo," replied Mr Twaddleton, "that Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher, who lived in the time of Solon, about six hundred years before Christ, invented the bellows, as well as the anchor and potter's wheel; but," he added, "there is some reason to doubt the truth of this statement. The bellows, however, were certainly known to the Greeks; and the great poet Virgil alludes to them in his fourth Georgic:†

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* A story is told of a young student—less intelligent of course than Tom Seymour—who, upon being asked the use of this hole, answered, "*for the reception of the knee while blowing the fire.*"

† Line 171.

'————Alii taurinis follibus auras
Accipiunt redduntque.'"

Mr Seymour now proposed that they should proceed to consider the structure and operation of the pump.

"I suppose," said Louisa, "that the pump raises water in the same manner as the squirt?"

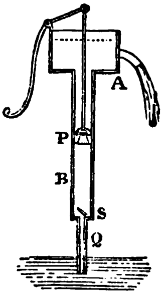
"Exactly upon the same principle," replied her father; "but the machinery is a little more complicated, since its object is not to force the water out of the pump at the same end of the pipe at which we draw it in. We will, however, proceed to the stable-yard, and examine the pump; and do you, Tom, provide a piece of chalk, in order that I may make a sketch of some of its principal parts."

The party immediately proceeded; and as they walked along, Mr Seymour desired the children to remember that the weight of the atmosphere was estimated as being equal to that of fifteen pounds upon every square inch of surface; and that the moment the water arrived at such a height as to balance that pressure, it could ascend no higher: he added that the altitude at which such a balance took place was about thirty-two or thirty-three feet above the surface.

"If that be the case," said Louisa, "the pump, of course, can never raise water from any well of greater depth than that which you state."

"Not without some additional contrivance, which I shall afterwards explain to you," replied Mr Seymour.

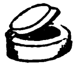
The party had, by this time, arrived at the pump; its door was opened, and as much of the apparatus exhibited as could be conveniently exposed. Mr Seymour then chalked the annexed sketch upon the stable-door.



"Is that a pump?" asked Tom: "I should certainly never have guessed what you intended to represent."

"It is not a perspective drawing, my dear, but a representation of the different parts as they would appear were it possible to cut the pump in halves, from top to bottom, without disturbing any of its arrangements. A drawing of this kind, which is frequently used for the sake of explanation, is termed a *section*."

Mr Seymour here took an apple from his pocket, and, having cut it in two, observed that the surface thus exposed presented *sections* of the fruit. This illustration was understood by all present, and Mr Seymour continued: "I have here, then, a section of the common household pump. A B is the cylinder or barrel; P the air-tight piston which moves or works within it by means of the rod; Q is the 'suction,' or feeding-pipe, descending into a well or any other reservoir; S, the valve, or little door, at the bottom of the barrel covering the top of the feeding-pipe; and there is a similar valve in the piston, both of which, opening upwards, admit the water to rise through them, but prevent its returning. As this part of the apparatus is no less ingenious than it is important, I will sketch the valve, or *clack*, as it is termed by the engineer, on a larger scale."



Their father then chalked the annexed figure; from which its construction was rendered perfectly intelligible to the children.

Mr Seymour proceeded: "When the pump is in a state of inaction, the two valves are closed by their own weight; but, on drawing up the piston P, from the bottom to the top of the barrel, the column of air, which rested upon it, is raised, and a vacuum is produced between the piston and the lower valves; the air beneath this valve, which is immediately over the surface of the water, consequently expands, and forces its way through it; the water then ascends into the pump. A few strokes of the handle totally exclude the air from the body of the pump, and fill it with water; which, having passed through both valves, runs out at the spout."

"I understand how water may be thus raised to the elevation of thirty-two feet, but I have yet to learn the manner in which it can be raised above that distance," said Louisa.

"It is undoubtedly true that, if the distance from the surface of the water to the valve in the piston exceed thirty-two feet, water can never be forced into the barrel; but you will readily perceive that when once the water has passed the piston-valve, it is no longer the pressure of the air which causes it to ascend; after that period it is raised by lifting it up as you would raise it in a bucket, of which the piston formed the bottom; and water, having been so raised, cannot fall back again, in consequence of the valve, which is kept closed by its pressure. All, therefore, that is necessary is to keep the working barrel within the limits of atmospheric pressure; we have then only to fix a continued straight pipe to the top of the barrel, and to lengthen the piston-rod in the same proportion, and the water will continue to rise at each successive stroke of the pump, until at length it will flow over the top of the pipe, or through a spout inserted in any part of its side. The common pump, therefore, is properly called the *sucking* and *lifting pump*."

The party expressed themselves fully satisfied; and Tom inquired who invented the machine.

"It is an instrument of great antiquity," replied his father: "its invention is generally ascribed to Ctesebes of Alexandria, who lived about a hundred and twenty years before Christ; but the principle of its action was not understood for ages after its invention. The ancients entertained a belief that 'Nature *abhorred* a vacuum;' and they imagined that, when the piston ascended, the water immediately rushed forward to prevent the occurrence of this much-dreaded vacuum. In the seventeenth century a pump was constructed at Florence, by which it was attempted to raise water from a well to a very considerable altitude, but it was found that no exertion of this machine could be made to raise it above thirty-two feet from its level. This unexpected embarrassment greatly puzzled the engineer, until Galileo suggested that the pressure on the water below must cause its ascent into the pump, and that, according to this theory, when it had risen thirty-two feet, its pressure became equivalent to that of the atmosphere, and could not, therefore, rise any higher; and as they did not, at that time, understand the construction of the piston-valve, the design was abandoned.

"Before we quit this subject," added Mr Seymour, "I wish to show you one or two experiments in farther elucidation of the effect of atmospheric pressure; but for this purpose we must return to the library."

As soon as the party had reassembled, Mr Seymour, pointing to the preparations on the table, said they would readily perceive that he required but a very simple apparatus for the occasion:—"Here, for instance, is a common glass tumbler filled with water, and I place over its mouth a piece of paper. I now invert it, and you see the paper does not fall off, nor does a single drop of water escape from the glass. I ask you, Tom, for an explanation."

"I suppose," answered the boy, "that the pressure of the atmosphere upon the paper kept it in its place."

"Undoubtedly; the external pressure of the air was greater than the gravitating force of the water; and I trust that, after the late explanation of the pump, you will readily perceive that this difference in favour of the atmospheric pressure must continue as long as the column of water does not exceed thirty-two feet."

"I understand that perfectly; but still I do not exactly see why the paper cover was necessary to keep the water in the tumbler."

His father informed him that, from the ample expanse of its mouth, the water, without such a guard, would at once have gushed out, and been replaced by the ascending air; whereas, had the mouth of the vessel terminated in a narrow neck, the paper might have been easily dispensed with; since in that case the small column of water would be unable to force a passage for itself through the contracted orifice, without undergoing a dispersion, and to that the cohesion of its particles would oppose an insuperable obstacle.

"Have you never observed the difficulty of drinking out of a phial?" asked his father.

"To be sure; very often at school, but I was never before able to account for it."

"We will now proceed to another experiment. I have here a lamp-glass, converted for the occasion, as you may perceive, into a water-bottle, by means of a cork inserted into its lower opening. I now propose, as in my former experiment, to fill it with water, and to place over its mouth a piece of paper, and then to invert it as before—observe! not a single drop of water escapes."

"Why, that is nothing more than a repetition of your former experiment," exclaimed Louisa.

"You are impatient, my dear girl; let me beg that you will wait, and observe what will follow."

"See! I now make a hole in the cork with your bodkin, and away pours out the water, sweeping the paper before it like a cataract. Can you explain this?" asked Mr Seymour.

"I suppose," said Tom, "that the air, by rushing through the hole you made in the cork, pressed out the water by its weight, just as the pea was shot out of my pea-shooter."

"You have not answered my question with your accustomed consideration," said his father. "Let me ask you, how it is possible that the air thus admitted should possess any such power? Have you so far forgotten first principles as not to know that its internal pressure will be counterbalanced by the atmosphere on the exterior; and that, an equilibrium being thus obtained, we may exclude altogether the interfering influence of atmospheric pressure?"

"I see it all clearly now—by letting the air into the glass you equalized its pressure on the outside," said Tom.

"And, therefore," added his father, "the water, being thus left to follow an unobstructed course, did, in obedience to the universal law of gravity, flow out of the vessel."

"With the knowledge, then, that you have thus acquired, you will readily understand many things of daily occurrence, which might otherwise appear unaccountable; thus, for instance, the vent-peg or *spigot* must be raised before the beer will flow out of the barrel. I allude more particularly to this example, as it will afford the simplest explanation of a very curious conjuring toy I have just obtained, and which I shall presently exhibit before you."

The children, as may be readily supposed, were much delighted by so exciting an announcement; nor were the vicar and Major Snapwell less curious to learn the nature of the proposed exhibition.

Mr Seymour having rung the bell, a servant entered with a black pint bottle, and sundry small glasses, duly arranged on a waiter.—"I now propose to supply each of my guests, from the same magical bottle, with a glass of any wine he may call for," said Mr Seymour.

The vicar preferred port, and received it; the major required sherry, and his wish was gratified; Tom asked for some sweet wine, and he obtained it; and thus did Mr Seymour proceed, successively filling five glasses, each with a different wine, from the same identical bottle.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the major; "I hope Mr Seymour has not formed an unholy alliance with the Prince of Darkness; for it must be confessed he rivals the magic of Mephistopheles in the wine-vaults of Leipsig.* At all events, let us beware how we spill a drop, lest it should turn to flame and consume us."

"Be not alarmed, my good and pious friends; as soon as I shall have described the ingenious construction of my bottle, its mysterious influence will be explained, and I shall be restored to your good opinion."

"This bottle," said Mr Seymour, "is made of tin-plate, so japanned as to resemble a common wine-bottle. In its interior there are five compartments, each terminating in a small tube in the neck, with an orifice on the outside. These air-holes, having a connection with the cavities within, act like the vent-peg of the barrel, to which I have lately alluded. When, therefore, they are covered by the fingers, it is evident that the liquid contents of the respective compartments cannot flow out of the bottle; but by raising each finger successively, we can command, at pleasure, the flow of any one of the liquids, in the manner you have witnessed."

Major Snapwell observed that he had frequently heard of this conjuring trick, as being one of the most surprising and successful efforts of M. Robin; whose wonderful art had lately elicited such general approbation from the sightseers of London.

We must now conclude the philosophic amusements of this day. To-morrow we hope to enter upon the interesting subject of the KITE.

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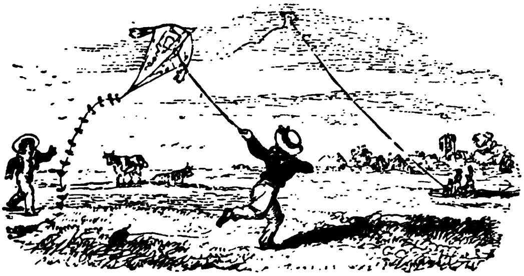
* Goethe's "Faust."



CHAPTER XIV.

THE children were summoned into the library, and informed by their father that he was at leisure to explain the philosophy of the kite; a subject with which Tom had repeatedly expressed some impatience to become acquainted.

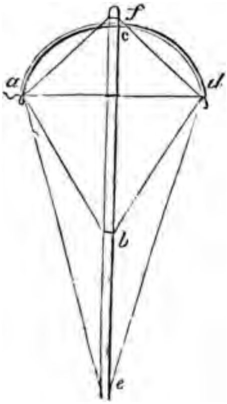
"It is a beautiful day," exclaimed the boy joyously; "and there is such a delightful breeze, that I should really call it a complete *kite-day*."

"Gently, my fine fellow," replied Mr Seymour: "the bird must be fledged ere it can fly. We have not, as yet, any kite; for you know that the one you possess is shattered beyond the possibility of repair."

"True; but could not Robert just step into the village and buy one? I saw several kites in the shop of Peg Robson yesterday."

"I do not doubt it, my boy; but the kites which are to be found in the toyshop are made to sell, rather than to fly; we must, therefore, construct one for ourselves; and see! I have accordingly prepared all the necessary materials for the purpose. I have here, as you perceive, a straight lath of deal, about three-quarters of an inch wide, and less than a quarter of an inch thick, and about four feet in length; this is quite ready for forming the standard, or *back-bone* of the kite: and now for the bow. The cooper has complied with my directions, and sent an unbent hoop as free as possible from knots; you observe that it is about the same length as the lath, but it will be necessary to pare it down a little at each end, in order to make it bend more readily to the required shape."

This having been accomplished, Mr Seymour proceeded to form the framework of the kite in the following manner. He first ascertained the central point of the bow, by balancing it on his fore-finger; he then affixed that point, by means of string, to the lath at *c*, about an inch and a half from its upper extremity; a notch was next cut in each end of the hoop, or bow, *a d;* having fixed the string in the notch, *a*, he drew it through another, *e*, previously cut in the bottom of the lath, and carried it to the opposite end of the bow, *d;* the skeleton now presented the usual form of the kite. The next point, therefore, was to ascertain whether the two sides of the bow were in equilibrio, which he determined by balancing the lath on the finger, and observing whether it remained horizontal, or dipped on either side. This adjustment having been accomplished, Mr Seymour next continued the string from *d* across the skeleton to the opposite notch *a*, giving it one turn round the lath in its way; from *a* it was carried to *f*, and wound round the top of the lath, and then again fastened at *d;* from *d* it was extended rather more than midway down the lath, and having been secured at *b*, was finally carried to, and secured in the notch *a.* The framework was now pronounced by Mr Seymour to be complete.*



The next part of the process was to cover it with paper. Mr Seymour observed, that the best kind which could be employed for this purpose was that known among stationers by the name of *fan-paper,* so called from its being manufactured for the use of the fan-maker; its merits, he said, depended upon the size of its sheets, as well as upon the thinness and firmness of its texture: this, however, was not at hand; he was, therefore, obliged to rest satisfied with its best substitute—viz., folio sheets of large thin post.

The party now went "ding-dong" to work; paper, paste, and scissors were immediately put in requisition. Sheets of paper were laid smooth on the table, and so arranged that each sheet overlapped its neighbour about half an inch. The skeleton of the kite was then placed upon them, and the paper was cut to its figure; a margin, of about three-quarters of an inch, having been left around it, except over the bow, where the margin was extended to an inch in width: this arrangement was for the purpose of allowing the paper to turn over the framework, when pasted to it. This part of the work having been completed, and a sufficient time allowed for the drying of the paste, Mr Seymour proceeded to fix the string, usually termed the *belly-band;* for this purpose two holes were drilled through the lath, at equal distances from its edges; the upper one about a fifth part of the length of the kite from the top, the lower hole rather more than the same distance above its extremity.

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* The author has been thus minute, in order to afford his young friends clear directions for constructing a kite, and which, as far as he knows, are not to be found in any work hitherto published; and he will also avail himself of this opportunity to state, that the thin glazed linen of various colours, commonly known to haberdashers by the name of lining, has been found to be the best material as a covering for the kite. It is not only more durable than paper, defying the most boisterous wind, but superior to it as being secure from the effects of a shower of rain.

The last, and by far the most important point, was to make the loop in the *belly-band.* If the kite be accurately constructed, its proper place may be easily found by extending the band, right or left, on the surface of the kite, and then marking the string at a point which lies in a line drawn from one end of the bow to the other; the loop must be made a little above such a point. If the kite be now suspended by this loop, the two ends of the bow ought to preserve a balance, and the lower extremity should dip below the upper part of the kite.

As Louisa observed the extreme care with which her father adjusted this part of the machine, she inquired into its use.

"I was myself about to put the same question," said her mother; "for its adjustment would appear to require as much accuracy as that of the sash of a girl of sixteen."

Mr Seymour informed them, they would hereafter find that the steady ascent of the kite into the air entirely depended upon such accuracy. "Have you not seen, Tom," asked he, "a kite rise sideways, or *plunge*, as it is called?"

Tom said he had often experienced that difficulty at school, but that he had attributed it to some defect in the tail.

"An error in the construction of the tail may, certainly, be occasionally the cause of such an accident, but it is more generally referable to an improper position of the loop: if the kite *plunges*, you may conclude that this loop is placed too high; and should it whirl round in the air, you may infer that it is too low."

During this conversation Mr Twaddleton entered the apartment. Tom was anxious to show him his newly-constructed kite, and while the party were asking him numerous questions, Mr Seymour observed, that the vicar would be more profitably employed in making *bobs* for the string of the tail, than in finding answers for their string of questions.

Mrs Seymour and her daughters, with Tom and the vicar, were, accordingly, placed round the table, for the purpose of carrying this project into effect, by a suitable division of labour. It was arranged that Mrs Seymour should cut the paper, the vicar fold it, and Mr Seymour tie it on the string.

"How long ought the tail to be?" asked Tom.

"And of what shape should the papers be cut?" inquired Louisa.

"And at what distances are they to be placed from each other on the string?" said Mrs Seymour.

"I will answer all your queries," replied the father "by giving you a dissertation upon this part of our machine."

"We shall now have an harangue," exclaimed the vicar, "as long as the tail itself; '*ut pueris placeas, et declamatio fias,*' * as Juvenal has it; but pray proceed."

"The tail should never be less than twelve, and should it even amount to twenty times the length of the kite, its appearance in the air will be more graceful: this, however, must be regulated by the weight of the string, and by the length and thickness of the pieces of paper of which the tail is composed. The length of each ought to be about three inches and a quarter, and an inch and a half in breadth, and it should be folded four times longitudinally; each of these *bobs*, as they are called, must be placed at regular intervals of three inches."

"And with respect to the size of the wings?" asked the vicar.

"I should not recommend any wings; if the kite be well made, there cannot be any advantage from such appendages; except it be to impart to it, when in the air, the appearance of a bird, gracefully balancing itself by the aid of wings. Having now answered your several questions, let us proceed with our work."

"But where is the paper?" asked Mrs Seymour.

"Apropos!" answered her husband; "the box in which the London toys were packed contains a quantity that will be buoyant enough, provided, indeed, there be no *stationery* amongst it."

The box was accordingly placed on the table.

"Why, what a most extraordinary miscellany!" cried the vicar; "the army of Mithridates could not have consisted of a more incongruous mixture. I perceive," added he, as his inquiring eyes glanced from sheet to sheet, "we have here fragments of the works of the living, as well as of the dead."

"The market," observed Mr Seymour, "is supplied with waste paper from the catacombs of Paternoster Row, which may be truly said to 'level all distinctions,' and over which I could really soliloquize like another Hamlet."

"Say, rather like a Mezentius," exclaimed the vicar, "since you are about to tie together the living and the dead."

"Well," continued Mr Seymour, "without intending any offence by a pun, my good vicar, what a *tale* will this box unfold. I never open a magazine of this waste paper, without feeling a deep sympathy for the melancholy fate of authors: to see the strange transmigrations, and vile purposes, to which their works are destined, is really heart-rending. That the *lights* of science should be consigned to the tallow-chandler! the works of the moralist to the soapseller! and unbought eulogies to the butterman!—and moreover, that '*Laennec on the Chest*,' with all his *Cases* in the bargain, should be *packed* off to the *trunk*-maker, are events which cannot fail to furnish food for serious contemplation."

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* "That you may please the boys, and afford them a theme for declamation."—*Juv.* x. 167.

"Oh! most shameful conduct!" exclaimed the vicar; "I know not its parallel, except it be the heartless conversion of the statue of Sejanus into pans and patters, so graphically described by Juvenal. I fully participate in your indignation. It was only the other day—can you believe it possible?—that I actually received a green cheese encased in '*Kitchener's Chart of the Moon*,' and a box of *Homeopathic* globules in an act of '*Much Ado about Nothing*.'"

"Ay! but that must have been some of the waste from the press; for, believe me, that Shakspeare holds a charm against all such desecration," said Mr Seymour.

"It may be so, but be pleased to remember," observed the vicar, "that Persius anticipated the same immunity on the score of popularity;[*] and yet, who shall say to what fish purposes he might not have been consigned, had he not taken shelter under the mantle of Juvenal![†] Nor can I forget how pointedly Martial has expressed his fears lest his epigrams might afford paper for serving up the *Tunny*.[‡] And, indeed, my dear friend, between ourselves, I have occasionally been visited by certain misgivings as to the fate of my own sermons."

"Impossible!—what! that your valuable discourses should be torn up, to become the surplices of fish? Oh, never, never, vicar; depend upon it that the days of St Anthony have for ever passed away; never more will the fishy race flock around the preacher, nor be again rapt up in his discourses."

"You strangely mistake me," said the vicar; "I have no particular dread of fish cookery, but of having my spiritual discourses profanely turned to temporal purposes."

"Such, for instance, as for the lining of a *Box*," slily suggested Mr Seymour.

"Oh! may the plague of Nemesis rest upon that *Box*; never more assail my ears with that word of ill omen, unless you wish to close its lid over my mortal remains."

"Let us then, at once, dispel all such unpleasant forebodings, and proceed with our more cheerful occupation."

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[*] "Nec Scombros metuenda Carmina."
Nor Verses in awe of the Mackerel.

[†] The Satires of Persius are generally printed together with those of Juvenal.

[‡] "Ne nigrum cito raptus in culinam
Cordylas madida tegas papyro."

"If you compose the tail of your kite with these papers," observed the vicar, "it will certainly vie with that of Scriblerus himself; you will have a knot of divinity, a knot of physic, a knot of logic, a knot of philosophy, a knot of poetry, and a knot of history."

"Never mind, my dear vicar, if the knots be only as binding and consistent as that which is said by Horace to unite the Graces—

'Segnesque nodum solvere Gratiæ;' *

we can surely desire nothing more; and I will undertake to prove their consistency, by showing in each page, with which you may present me, an apposite allusion to the tail of which it is to form a part."

"Apposite allusion! impossible; as well might you attempt to connect the scattered leaves of the Sibyl."

"You will, nevertheless, very soon perceive that I shall be able, not only to bring them into consistent connection with each other, but to give them to the winds without the slightest apprehension of any Sibylline dispersion," said Mr Seymour.

"I say it is not possible, but am quite willing to abide the issue. Here, for example, is an Epitome of the Roman History."

"Very well," said Mr Seymour, "and pray is not that cur*tail?*"

The vicar dropped the paper in dismay; the treacherous design of his friend now, for the first time, flashed across his brain with a painful conviction, and he hastily retreated to a distant corner of the library, or "*turned tail*," as Mr Seymour jocosely expressed it, in order that he might find shelter from the pelting of a pitiless storm of puns, which he saw, too clearly, was about to burst on his devoted head;—and all from that everlasting Box!

On the vicar's retiring from the table, Mrs Seymour approached the fatal box, observing, "that it was now her turn to explore the Sibylline cave."

"Here," said she, "is a list of the prices of some newly-published works."

"That," replied her husband, as he cast a sly glance at the vicar, "is re*tail:* pray proceed."

"We have next, I perceive, a prospectus for publishing all the speeches in the late parliament."

"That is de*tail.*"

Here a deep groan from Mr Twaddleton arrested the progress of the proceedings, and threw the whole party into a fit of laughter. As soon as tranquillity was restored, Mrs Seymour again dipped her hand into the box, and drew forth the fragments of a work on "The Descent of Real Property."

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* "The Graces slow to loose the knot that binds them."
—*Horat. Od.* iii., 21.

"That," said Mr Seymour, "is en*tail;* pray *cut it off*, and give it to me, so that it may pass into a different *line* of succession."

"We have here," continued the lady, "the Memoirs of an Italian Bandit."

"Then prepare him for his fate; I have a noose quite ready for his reception."

"Here is a poem, entitled Waterloo."

"I will patronise it," said her husband; "and I warrant you that, under my auspices, the Muse will soar to a greater height than she ever could otherwise have attained."

"Here comes a puzzle for your ingenuity," said Mrs Seymour; "a proposal for uniting the Boards of Customs and Excise."

"Well, and what is that but dove*tail?*" responded her husband.

"We have next a pamphlet 'On Medical Reform'—what say you to that?"

"That I have lost my wager, and been fairly beaten," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "for I defy the power of man to make either head or *tail* of it."

Thus did Mr and Mrs Seymour proceed; the one cutting paper, the other cutting jokes; nor did the former cease stringing puns until he had finished stringing the tail.

"I must now conclude by making a knot that shall not be in danger of becoming untied in the breeze," said Mr Seymour: "but stop, stop one moment! I still require one more piece of paper to complete my task, and let it be double."

"Here then is a piece of paper, which, from its texture, appears to be well adapted to your purpose. Let me see, what is it? I declare it is the title-page of an Essay on Matrimony."

"Capital!" cried her husband; "a strange coincidence, truly; you have, indeed, furnished me with a knot that cannot be easily untied, however stiff may be the breeze; * hand it over to me, for it will afford a very legitimate finish, and is generally the conclusion of every *tale;* but where is the vicar? What, ho! Mr Twaddleton, vicar of Overton, come into the court."

"Upon my word," exclaimed the reverend gentleman, as he pushed aside the screen, behind which he sat ensconced, "your volatility, Mr Seymour, is wholly inconsistent with the gravity of a scientific guide, and a sage instructor of youth. I am ashamed of you."

"But at present," replied Mr Seymour, "I am the manufacturer of a kite's tail; and, surely, upon such an occasion, *flightiness* ought not to be urged to my disparagement; besides, my good friend, let me remind you of what I have before stated,† that the Muses occasionally cast off their reserve, and delight in intervals of merriment;

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* This was written before the appointment of a Judge Ordinary.—ED.

† See page 10.

and since we agreed to construct the kite's tail on the principle of that union and consistency of which they are the approved model—surely we may, like them, diversify the monotony of our labour by an occasional sally of humour and a spice of pleasantry."

The classical spell, thus skilfully worked, speedily did its bidding; —the waters of strife were tranquillised—the vicar was appeased.

"Pray, Tom," quietly asked the vicar, "can you tell me whence the name of the kite originated?"

"From the bird of that name, I suppose," answered the boy; "for being a bird of prey, he soars to a great height, and in that respect, at least, my paper kite may be said to resemble him."

"That is a very good explanation," said the vicar; "or it may, perhaps, have derived its name from the circumstance of its having been originally constructed in the shape of a bird of this description. In China the flying of kites is much more practised than in this country; and I understand that their shape is always that of some bird."

"In the London toyshops you may constantly meet with them in such forms, as well as in many other fantastic shapes," observed Mr Seymour; "and," continued he, "I remember to have seen, some years ago, a kite which resembled a man. It was made of linen cloth, cut, and painted for the purpose, and stretched on a light frame, so constructed as to resemble the outline of the human figure. It stood upright, and was dressed in a sort of jacket. Its arms were disposed like handles on each side of its body, and its head being covered with a cap, terminating in an angle, favoured the ascent of the machine, which was twelve feet in height; but to render it easier to be transported, it could be folded double, by means of hinges adapted to the frame. The person who directed this kind of kite was able to raise it, though the weather was calm, to the height of nearly five hundred feet; and, when once raised, he maintained it in the air by giving only a slight motion to the string. The figure, by these means, acquired a kind of libration, like that of a man skating on the ice. The illusion, occasioned by this spectacle, did not fail, as you may readily suppose, to attract a great number of spectators."

"I believe, however," observed the vicar, "that the figure commonly adopted is the one best calculated for the purpose."

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr Seymour, "and for obvious reasons; the curvature of the bow enables it to escape the resistance of the air as it rises; which, after having struck it, slides off, just as the current is more effectually turned aside by the gently-curved prow, than by that which has a sharp outline. This shape of the kite, moreover, presents the largest surface at the point upon which the wind can act with the greatest effect, while the whole is lightened by the removal of parts that would obstruct its action. The tail has also a greater control over a figure of such a description."

Mr Seymour asked the vicar, whether he could explain the origin of the French term for the kite, viz., *cerf volant*, or flying stag. "I never can believe," continued he, "that the kite could ever have been constructed in the shape of that animal."

"I am unable to clear up the difficulty," replied the vicar; "and yet I have bestowed some pains upon the subject. The earliest notice of the kite, which I have been able to discover, is in a short English and French Dictionary, by Miege, which was published in the year 1690, and it is there described under the name of *cerf volant*."

"I wonder," cried Tom, "who invented the kite?"

"In that again," answered Mr Twaddleton, "I am unable to furnish you with any satisfactory information. Strutt tells us that its introduction into England cannot be dated farther back than about a hundred and fifty years. It is, however, supposed that we are indebted for it to the Chinese, in which country the pastime would seem to be of very ancient date, and from which it was probably introduced into Europe.* In the present day kite-flying is a very popular game amongst these extraordinary people, and they excel as well in the curious construction of their kites as in the height to which they make them ascend. The ninth day of the ninth moon is a holiday especially devoted by them to this national pastime; on which day, numbers may be seen repairing to the hills for that purpose. They also, by means of round holes, supplied with vibrating cords, make them produce a loud humming noise, like that of the top."

Mr Seymour here remarked, that he had lately read, in "Abbot's Journey to Moscow and St Petersburgh," of a kite so constructed that every passing breeze gave a vibration to a tight cord, which, being communicated to the highly sonorous frame of the kite, produced an effect most musical and melancholy—an aerial music warbling through the air, like the wild sounds of the Eolian Harp; the same whispering breeze now awakening joyous notes, and anon, sad and pensive wailings.†

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* It is a curious fact that the toys and games, so familiar to the English should be found in most distant and various parts of the world. Dr Hooker, in his Himalayan Journal, tells us that he was amused by watching a child playing with a *pop-gun* made of bamboo, similar to that of quill, with which most English children are familiar; and that on the plains of India men may be often seen, for hours together, flying kites. Chess, dice, draughts, battledore and shuttlecock, are all Indo-Chinese or Tartarian; but it is still more extraordinary to find the kite mentioned in Sir George Grey's "Polynesian Mythology." In the legend of Ratu, we there read "of one Whatakau, a little lad, whose amusement was flying kites;" and in the legend of the immigration of Turi to New Zealand, the boys are related as whipping their tops and whirling their whizgigs.

† Under a favourable breeze, the wires of the Electric Telegraph will yield the same unbidden strains, which are rendered more audible by placing the ear against the pole, and thus obtaining the aid of resonance. It is impossible, under any circumstances, to view, without emotion, these widely-extended wires, with the consciousness that human thoughts are rapidly passing along them: but should the wind, at the same time, excite them to Eolian sounds, our

"Even so," said the vicar, "even so, my dear Mr Seymour, is it ever with the human heart: in the midst of gaiety there is always sadness, since the chords of pleasure are so interwoven with those of melancholy, that it is difficult to touch the one without causing the vibration of the other."

Mrs Seymour here observed that the effect must be exceedingly fine, since she understood that numbers of such musical kites were kept constantly flying during the night.

reason is fairly taken captive by fancy; and so readily do we pass from the real to the ideal, that it is scarcely possible to evade the question which spontaneously arises in the mind, as to their possible sympathy with the intelligence they are transmitting, or, on the contrary, whether they may not be directly antagonistic with it; whether, in short, their pensive wailings may not be the soft whisperings of love, or their gay syren notes the throbbings of anguish, and the notes of despair? Mr Willis, in his "*Out-doors at Idlewild,*" has indulged in some such reflections with much poetical fancy.

CHAPTER XV.

ON the following day, before the wings of the lark had brushed away the morning dew, Tom and his sisters, buoyant with expectation, had descended into the garden, in order to ascertain the state of the weather and the direction of the wind; but the sky was sullen and calm; not a breath disturbed the susceptible leaves of the aspen; all was repose—"a dread repose."

"No kite-day this," sighed Tom, with a countenance as lowering as the morning clouds.

"Have patience," said Louisa; "the wind may yet rise; it is only just six o'clock."

Thus did the minds of the children continue to hover between hope and despair, until after breakfast, when they determined to seek the gardener, and hold a grave consultation with that acknowledged judge of the elements; he told them that showers might be expected, but he thought it probable that the wind might rise after mid-day. "I will, however," said he, "consult my oracles (37); after which, I shall be able to give you a satisfactory opinion." So saying, he left them; and, on his return, observed that "as the *Siberian sow-thistle* had closed itself the preceding evening, and the *African marigold* continued shut after seven o'clock in the morning, he had thought there would be rain; but," he added, "that upon inspecting the *poor man's weatherglass*, the *Anagallis arvensis*, or *red pimpernel*, two hours ago, he had found it open, from which he concluded that the day would have been fine."

"There, Louisa; it will be a fine day after all," exclaimed her delighted brother.

"No, indeed," continued the gardener; "on returning just now to the flower, which never deceives us, I found it had closed itself; so that rain is inevitable."

Nor was this opinion erroneous; for before the brother and sister could reach the lodge, the heavy clouds began to discharge their watery burthen, and the rain continued in one incessant shower for more than two hours; it then gradually abated, and the children, who had been anxiously watching it at the library window, were suddenly relieved from their anxiety by the appearance of the vicar whom they espied slowly winding his way through the dripping shrubbery.

"'Heu! quianam tanti cinxerunt æthera nimbi!'

as Virgil has it," exclaimed the vicar, as he approached the portico, where Mr Seymour and his family had assembled to salute him.

"We are under the influence of St Swithin, vicar," said Mrs Seymour, "and I fear there is but slender hope of its becoming fair."

"Psha! who cares for St Swithin? (38.) My barometer is rising rapidly, and I place more confidence in that classical deity, Mercury, than in a saint of so very questionable a character."

At this moment Phœbus, as if delighted by the compliment thus bestowed upon his heathen brother, cast a sly glance from behind a dark cloud, and illumined the spot upon which the vicar was standing. In short, after the lapse of half an hour, the sun broke through the gloom, and a brisk gale followed; the countenances of the children sympathised with the face of the heavens, and the expression of hope lighted them up, in proportion as the sun illumined the departing clouds with its radiance.

"It is now quite fair, papa," cried Tom, in a voice of triumph, "and there is a most delightful wind; shall we not proceed at once to the common?"

"Presently," answered his father: "the ground is yet extremely wet."

In the course of an hour this objection had been removed, and the party prepared to set off on their kite-flying expedition.

"Bring me the kite, and let me sling it properly over Tom's shoulder," said Mr Seymour.

"I will carry the string," exclaimed Louisa; "how nicely it is wound round the stick!"

On the arrival of the party at Overton Heath, the weather was found propitious to their adventure; the kite impatiently fluttered in the breeze, while Tom was eagerly engaged in unwinding its streaming tail, and preparing the paper machine for ascent.

"Is the string fixed to the belly-band?" asked Mr Seymour.

"All is ready," replied the vicar; "and I will hold it up, while Tom runs with it against the wind. Had King Eric set his cap for us, we could not have had a more favourable breeze."

"There is not the least occasion to raise the kite from the ground," observed Mr Seymour: "let its point rest on the grass, and place its tail in a straight line in front of it; I warrant you it will rise, as soon as Tom begins to run."

Tom immediately set off, and the kite rose majestically into the air.

"Give it string—give it string—gently, gently—now stop; there is no occasion for your running any farther, but let out the cord, as long as the kite carries it off vigorously, and keeps it fully stretched; but wind it up the moment its tension is relaxed."

"It is rising very fast," cried the breathless boy, "but the string burns my hand as it passes through it; I shall not be able to endure the heat."

"Be patient, and let it pass more slowly; put on your glove," said his father.

"Ay, ay; put on your glove," repeated the vicar; "even Xenophon himself, who declaimed so warmly against the effeminacy of the Persians for wearing gloves, would scarcely have refused his consent to their use on such an occasion."

"Nor did the old Grecian warrior, Laertes, disdain the protection of gloves against the thorns and thistles, while working in his garden," * added Mr Seymour, to the no small satisfaction of his classical friend.

"What is it that produces so much heat?" inquired Louisa.

"The friction of the string," replied her father: "do you not know that carriages frequently catch fire from the friction of their wheels, unless it be prevented by the application of grease?"

"Yes," said Tom; "and I have heard that the natives of some countries kindle their fires by rubbing pieces of wood together."

"The original inhabitants of the new world," observed his father, "throughout the whole extent from Patagonia to Greenland, procured fire by rubbing pieces of hard and dry wood against each other, until they emitted sparks, or burst into flame; some of the people to the north of California produced the same effect by inserting a kind of pivot in the hole of a very thick plank, and causing it to revolve with extreme rapidity: the same principle will explain how immense forests may have been consumed; for it is evident, that the violent friction of the branches against each other from the agitation of the wind, would be fully adequate to the production of such an effect."

"You have also an excellent example of the effect of friction in producing heat," said the vicar, "in the history of the whale fishery; for in harpooning the fish, unless the sailors observe the greatest caution in letting out the rope, its friction upon the side of their boat will be sure to set it on fire."

"And how do they manage it?" asked Louisa.

"As soon as the whale dives, (39,) after having been wounded, it draws out the line or cord of the harpoon, which is coiled up in the boat, with very considerable velocity. In order, therefore, to prevent any accident from the violence of this motion, one man is stationed with an axe to cut it asunder, if it should become entangled; while another, with a mop, is constantly cooling with water the channel through which it passes."

"The kite is now at a considerable height," observed Tom; "but look at the string, how bent it is! I have repeatedly endeavoured to pull it straight, but without success."

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* Odyss.

"How could you have expected to succeed in the attempt? Consider the weight of such a long line of string."

"Then it is not the pressure of the atmosphere which gives it that curved form?"

"Assuredly not: have you so soon forgotten that the air presses equally in all directions, and would therefore tend to straighten, as much as to give a curved direction to the string? But, as you now appear to have let out the whole of your string, suppose you allow the kite to enjoy its airing, while we proceed to consider the philosophy of its ascent, and the nature and direction of those forces by which it is effected."

"The kite pulls so amazingly hard," cried Tom, "that unless I fix the string securely round the tree, we shall run the chance of losing it."

"I am well aware of the force it exerts," replied his father. "Dr Franklin has said, that, with a good kite, a man unable to swim might be sustained in the water, so as to pass from Dover to Calais; but I agree with him in thinking, that a packet would be a much safer as well as a pleasanter mode of conveyance."

"Now, then, for your explanation of the kite's ascent. Unless I am mistaken, you will find the subject much more complicated than you imagine," said the vicar.

"Not at all; Tom, who, I trust, has a perfect acquaintance with the composition and resolution of forces, will very readily understand the explanation I propose to offer. I admit, however, that there are some few points in the inquiry, which cannot be successfully treated without a knowledge of the higher branches of the mathematics; but I shall, of course, avoid all such difficulties.* Can you tell me, Tom, what advantage is gained by your running with the kite?" asked Mr Seymour.

"I suppose that you thus obtain more force from the wind."

"Certainly: action and reaction are equal. By running, therefore, with your kite against the wind, you strike the air, and thus produce a reaction, which is equal to the force of the blow given to it. When the wind is high, and its action is not intercepted by surrounding objects, there cannot exist any necessity for such an expedient."

"The principle is the same as that which enables the bird to rise into the air by flapping its wings," observed the vicar.

"Unquestionably," replied Mr Seymour.

"Does the kite, then, rise in the air, from the same causes that enable a bird to fly?" asked Tom.

"We are not at present considering the ascent of the kite, but the advantage which is obtained by running with it: which, as the vicar has properly observed, undoubtedly depends upon the same principle as that which enables the bird to rise, by the motion of its wings, and which constitutes the third law of motion,* viz., that *action and re-action are equal;* that is to say, whenever one body exerts a force upon another, the second body opposes the first, with equal force, in an opposite direction. If, then, the bird strikes the air below it with a force which is equal to its weight, then must there be a reaction of the air, upwards, exactly equal to it; and the bird, being acted upon by two equal forces, in opposite directions, will necessarily rest between them."

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* Those elder readers who are inclined to enter more deeply into the subject, may consult, with advantage, a memoir on the kite, by Euler, published in the Transactions of the Academy of Berlin for the year 1756.

"That is clear enough; but the bird *rises*," answered Tom.

"Because the force of the stroke is *greater* than the weight of the bird, and it therefore rises with the *difference* of these two forces; were the stroke *less* than its weight, then would it sink with the difference. Suppose, for example, a bird weighs *twelve* ounces, and it strikes the air with a force equal to *sixteen*, is it not clear that it must rise with a force equal to *four?* and is it not evident that, if it strikes the air with a force equal only to *eight*, that it must sink with a force equal to *four?*"

"So far I understand it perfectly; but I was thinking that, as the wing flaps up and down, what was gained by striking the air downwards must be counterbalanced when the bird raised her wing again, and thus struck the air in the contrary direction," observed Tom.

"I give you no small degree of credit for that remark," said his father; "for it is undoubtedly true that, if the flapping of the wings in flight were no more than the motion of the same surface upwards and downwards, the bird must lose as much by one motion as she could gain by the other; the skylark could never ascend by such an action, for, as you have so justly remarked, although the stroke upon the air by the under side of her wing would carry her up, the stroke from the upper side, when she raised her wing again, would bring her down; but if you will attentively examine the structure of the wing, you will at once perceive, from its external convexity, the disposition, and more particularly the overlapping of its larger feathers, that when the wing is drawn up, its surface is contracted, and when let down fully expanded—or, in other words, that the feathers strike the air downwards with their flat side, but rise from the stroke slantwise, just as the rower in a boat, after having given the stroke, turns his oar so as only to present its edge, an operation which is termed *feathering*, from its resemblance to this very action of the wing in flight."

"It appears to me that flying is an easy process," said Tom: "could we not contrive some sort of flapper, by which we might be able to rise into the air?"

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* See p. 46.

"Your opinion, my dear boy, is by no means singular; hundreds have entertained the same belief before you; and so confident was the famous Bishop Wilkins, that he declared it to be his conviction, that, in future ages, it will be as usual to hear a man call for his wings, as it is now to call for his boots."

"Yes," said the vicar; "and if my memory is correct, William of Malmesbury, in his account of the Conquest of England by the Normans, mentions a Benedictine monk, by the name of Elmer, who having affixed wings to his hands and feet, ascended a lofty tower whence he took his flight, but he fell to the ground and broke both his legs."—"*Pennis non homini datis.*" *

"I do not see the difficulty," exclaimed Tom.

"The weight of our bodies is so great, that we have not sufficient muscular strength to impart a blow to the air that shall be equal to it; while the solidity of our bones, contrasted with the hollow structure of those of birds, opposes an insuperable difficulty. Now are you satisfied?" said his father.

"I am perfectly satisfied, if that be the case, we can never hope to fly." (40)

"I fear not," answered his father; "and yet, as Lord Bacon says, 'we must not declare that to be impossible which happens to surpass our present powers.'"

"Unless it be in direct violation of Nature's ordinances," interposed the vicar, "which is obviously the case in every attempt to endow man with the powers of flight. It is only by obeying Nature that we can command her. The poor moth, as it flutters about you, ought surely to humble your pride, and rebuke your presumption, and may, perchance, as a crowning act of its mission, extinguish the very lamp by whose light you are so busily calculating the forces that are to direct your enterprise; and let me tell you, Mr Seymour, that, in such a case, the moth does good service by pointing an instructive moral—by teaching us that great evils may attend the indulgence of an instinctive impulse, unless it be checked by the light of reason and the guidance of experience."

"I anxiously wait to learn the application of your moral," said Mr Seymour.

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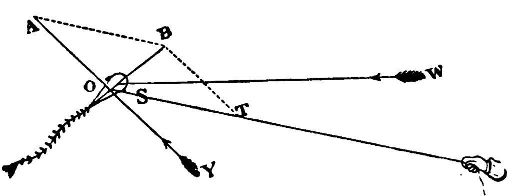
* "Artists," observes M. Oersted, "err greatly in attaching wings to human figures, of such a size, and so placed as to lead the imagination to accept them as real, instead of emblematic organs of flight. We are taught by comparative anatomy that in all vertebrate animals wings are only formed by a peculiar development of the instruments of motion belonging to the fore parts of the body; the representation of the human figure with wings and arms is therefore a monstrous absurdity; and the supernatural idea, by such an attempt to make it appear natural, is rendered unnatural."—*The Soul in Nature.* What, again, can be more absurd than the winged *busts* on our gravestones? to which a wit, with his Hudibrastic power of bringing into apposition the most remote and discordant images, gave the designation of *Celestial Poultry!*

" Its application ! Why, does not the moth, by a kind of retributive justice, pay the penalty of a reckless flight to a light it could not comprehend, and falling, like another Icarus, scatter the ashes of its singed wings over the diagram of the no less infatuated philosopher ?"

" Upon my word, vicar, you are, at all events, disposed to give a full expansion to the wings of your poetical imagination, and to launch them for a very ambitious airing."

" Mr Seymour, I never allow my imagination to blind my judgment, nor, to adopt your metaphor, do I suffer my wings to cover my eyes, like those angels in Scripture, to which Locke has so figuratively alluded."

" If you will only fold up your gaudy wings, and quietly descend from the higher regions, and humbly join me on earth below, I think I shall, at least, be able to convince you that if philosophy has failed in enabling man to fly, it has, at all events, by means of such pursuits, advanced our knowledge with regard to the mechanical theory of forces. We are, for instance, thus indebted for the improvement and various modifications of the *vane*, or *fly*, which, by resisting the air, as it spins round, becomes the regulator of machinery. The intervals between the strokes on the bell of a clock are thus regulated, and the fly is so contrived that this interval may be altered, or the clock made to strike faster or slower, by presenting the arms of it more or less obliquely to the direction in which they move. The same kind of fly is the regulator used in musical boxes, as I will presently show you, and indeed in almost all mechanical toys; and, moreover, a fly of this kind, provided its arms be set at a proper angle, and a rapid spinning motion be given to it, will actually take flight, and rise to a very considerable elevation, and thus realise the idea of a flying machine. I have such an apparatus, and intend to call it *The Flying Top*. On our return you shall see it; but after this digression let us, without farther delay, proceed with the subject of the kite; for, as yet, we have merely considered the effect of increasing the wind upon its surface : we have next to inquire how the wind operates in raising it into the air.—Do



you not remember, when I adjusted the noose in the belly-band, I stated that much depended upon this part of the apparatus? You will at once perceive that it will influence the angle which the kite forms with the earth; and I am about to prove to you, that the theory of the kite's ascent is materially connected with the value of this angle; but, in order to render my explanation intelligible, I have prepared a diagram, to which I am desirous of directing your attention.

"The kite here appears in the act of rising from the ground; the line W will represent the direction of the wind blowing upon it, all the currents of which we will suppose united in one; it is evident, from what has been already stated, that as it falls upon an oblique surface, it will be resolved into two forces, viz., into one parallel with it, and into another perpendicular to that surface; of which the force represented by the line Y will alone produce any effect, carrying the kite along the line O A, or in a direction parallel to itself; and you must have observed that this was the direction in which the kite was impelled, when you suffered it to rise, without checking its progress by the string."

"I remember that well," said Tom; "and I also observed that, when I pulled my string, the kite immediately rose more perpendicularly."

"To be sure it did; because by that operation you called a new force into action, which I have represented in the diagram by the line S T. The kite was therefore under the influence of the two forces O A and S T, and, since these are in the direction of the two sides of a parallelogram, it would not obey either, but ascend through O B, its diagonal."

"Notwithstanding Mr Twaddleton's doubts upon the subject," said Tom, "I am sure that I perfectly understand your explanation; and I think I may also answer for my sister: but you have not yet told us anything about the tail; I suppose, however, that it acts like the rudder of a ship, or the tail of a bird."

"Before I answer that question, let me inform you how the tail of a bird differs, in its action and uses, from the rudder of a ship. In the first place, the rudder is so fixed that it can but move in one horizontal plane, and can therefore only turn the vessel to the right or left, which, indeed, is all that is required (41); but the tail of the bird, in addition to this motion, can be placed in a diagonal direction, and when expanded will offer a considerable surface to the air so as to fulfil some of the offices of a third wing. Have you never watched the manœuvres of the rook, as he gambols through the air? After flying in the ordinary way, you will observe his wings at rest, and that he glides along apparently without the least exertion in his descent. In this case his expanded wings act as a parachute: then, again. you will observe him wheeling round, a manœuvre which is partly produced by the oblique position of his tail, and which is readily explained upon the principle of the resolution of forces I have just described with reference to the action of the wind upon the surface of the kite. I ought also to state, that the tail serves to poise the body of the bird."

"Does the bird, then, never use its wings for the purpose of directing its course?" asked Louisa.

"Undoubtedly it does," answered her father: "the tail is only to be considered as a supplementary organ; it is by means of the wings that it generally directs its course, for it is evident, that it can easily turn, either to the right or left, by flapping the opposite wing with increased force, just as a boat is turned about to the right, by a brisk application of the left oar. And hence the more rapid the flight is forward, the greater is the difficulty of one wing surpassing the other in velocity; and the deviations are less sudden. This is the reason why the birds which fly with the greatest velocity make large circuits on turning. In like manner the irregular flight of the butterfly, now up and now down, now to the right and now to the left, is no doubt effected by the wings striking the air one after the other, or perhaps with an alternate and unequal force. The object of such an action is obviously to baffle the pursuit of birds which fly in a right line, whereas you see the butterfly does just the contrary." (42)

"How very wonderful," said Louisa, "is the action of the wings of insects! I have often watched them during their flight, and their rapidity is such as to surpass the power of vision."

"I shall have occasion to advert to that subject hereafter," said Mr Seymour; "at present I shall only observe, that a gnat's wing, in its ordinary flight, beats many hundred times in a second."

"But you have not yet answered Tom's question," said the vicar. "Of what use is the tail of the kite? Does it assist its ascent, or is it merely an appendage of ornament?"

"In the first place, it keeps the head of the kite to the wind, and prevents its lower half from going too far to leeward; and in the next, it lowers its centre of gravity, and throws it towards its extremity, which not only prevents the chance of the machine being upset in the air, but so poises and regulates the position of the kite as to maintain the angle which it is necessary for the string to make with the surface."

Mr Twaddleton here inquired what might be the most advantageous angle for the kite to form with the horizon, in order that the paper machine should rise to the greatest altitude.

"If the wind be horizontal," answered Mr Seymour, "it is evident that the inclination of the kite's surface ought to be the same as that which the rudder of a ship should make with the keel, in order that the vessel may be turned with the greatest facility; supposing the currents of water which impel it to have a direction parallel to the keel."

"And what ought that angle to be?" inquired the vicar.

"*Fifty-four* degrees, and *forty-four* minutes," replied Mr Seymour; "and let me here remark," continued he, "as we have already considered the philosophy of the flight of a bird, that its pinions are so set upon the body as to bring down the wings in an *oblique* direction towards the tail; so that in their action upon the air, we have the same resolution of forces as in that of the wind upon the surface of the kite, by which the body of the bird is not only supported, or raised perpendicularly, but carried forward."

Tom here interrupted the dialogue, by expressing a regret that he should have been provided with so small a quantity of cord.

"I do not believe, my dear boy, that any advantage could be gained by an additional quantity of string," said his father.

"Is there, then, any reason why the kite should not ascend, even above the clouds, provided that my string were sufficiently long and strong?"

"Yes; indeed is there a most unanswerable reason. Remember that the kite is made to rise by the operation of two forces; the one afforded by the wind, the other by the action of the string; now it is quite evident that, when the weight of the string, added to that of the kite itself, becomes equal to the force of the wind, acting upon the surface of the machine, a general balance, or equilibrium, of forces will be established, and the kite can no longer continue to ascend."

"Will it, then, remain stationary under these circumstances?" asked Louisa.

"It must do so, unless the force of the wind should abate; for it is a proposition in mechanics, which I shall hereafter endeavour to demonstrate (43), that, if a body be acted upon by three forces, which are proportional to, and in the direction of, the three sides of a triangle, it will be kept at rest. The kite is exactly in this predicament, for its weight, the force of the wind, and the action of the string, fulfil these conditions, and consequently keep the kite stationary."

"Then I must give up my intention of trying to raise the kite above the clouds," said Tom.

"Although you may not be able to raise any single kite to the altitude you may desire, it is easy to accomplish your plan by a series of kites: the string of the first being attached to the back of the second, and so on."

"How, papa? I do not exactly understand you."

"Your kite," said Mr Seymour, "is now as high in the air as the force of the wind is capable of raising it; suppose you were to fix the end of the string you hold in your hand to the back of another kite, would not this second kite ascend as high as your first, by the same force, and your first kite therefore arise to double the altitude it is at present? In like manner you might attach a third kite, and so on."

"Now I comprehend it; and I should much like to try the experiment," said Tom.

"You shall certainly witness the effect I have described; but you must provide yourself with some stout string, for the force which the kites exert when thus arranged, is greater than you can easily imagine; indeed I question whether you would be able to hold them," observed his father.

Mr Twaddleton here informed the young party that he had himself witnessed a carriage containing three persons that had been drawn along the road by kites, at the rate of from fifteen to twenty miles an hour.

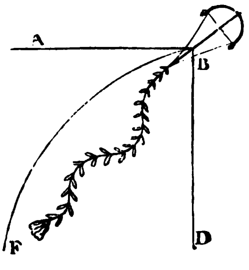
"I have seen the account of it," said Mr Seymour, "and if I remember right, the principal kite was preceded at the distance of about 120 feet by a smaller pilot one, which served to direct it away from any obstacles, such as trees, houses, &c., with which it might otherwise have come in contact."

"But how was the pilot-kite made obedient to the will of the driver?" asked Louisa.

"By means of strings so attached to it that its surface was easily made to alter its angular position," answered Mr Seymour.

"If my twine should snap," said Tom, whose attention was suddenly drawn to his kite from a slight unsteadiness in its motion, arising from a gust of wind, "we could easily recover it, that is one good thing; for it is hovering over the open field at the end of the heath."

"If you imagine that the kite, under such circumstances, would fall upon the spot directly under it, you are much deceived; recollect that, if the string should snap, the kite would be abandoned to two forces, those of the wind and its own gravity; and you will perceive that, under such circumstances, it could not obey either of them, but would fall in an intermediate or diagonal direction. This fact will be rendered apparent by the annexed diagram. B A may be supposed to represent the force and direction of the wind acting upon the kite, and B D that of its gravity; then it is evident that, under the influence of these joint forces, it would describe the diagonal, and for reasons already explained, that line must necessarily be the *curve*, B F."



"Come," said the vicar, "before Tom draws down his kite, let us send up a *messenger*."

"What may that be?" asked Louisa.

"A piece of paper or pasteboard, which, on being introduced upon the string, is blown along the line up to the kite."

The *messenger* was accordingly prepared, and, being placed upon the string, it ascended as Mr Seymour had anticipated. While this operation was in progress, the vicar stood earnestly gazing upon the kite, and at length burst forth in the following animated soliloquy:—

"Assuredly, this must be acknowledged as a most beautiful and imposing toy! Fastidious or insensible must be that person who does not feel exhilarated as he gazes on the kite, proudly floating under the canopy of heaven, and reflecting the departing smiles of the evening sun, after it has ceased to cheer us below."

"It has been said," observed Mr Seymour, "to the disparagement of kite-flying, that as soon as the machine has been raised into the air, and all the string let out, the excitement of the sport is at an end, and that, as nothing further can be achieved, the interest of the performer from that moment begins to languish: now, at this period, the *messenger* will open a new source of pleasure and instruction, and may, by a little ingenuity, be made to afford a great diversity of amusement. I have, therefore, provided myself with several varieties of this machine. Here is one in the form of a dragon, which, as it ascends, produces a very striking and almost magical effect. See, there it goes!"

The children were delighted, for the string upon which it was carried became at a certain height invisible; so that the figure appeared like a monster hovering in the air.

"I will now show you a *winged* variety of this apparatus, which we will name the *Brompton Messenger.** It consists of a hollow cylinder of thin wood, the diameter of which is sufficiently large to allow its free revolution round the string of the kite. To this cylinder are attached several flappers or sails, in an oblique direction, like those of the "*Flying Top*," (p. 189,) each of which is covered with paper of a different colour, or, what is more striking, with tinfoil of different colours. The action of the wind upon those oblique surfaces necessarily occasions a rapid rotation, upon a principle which I shall presently explain: and the beautiful effect thus produced, as the whirling body ascends, must be seen before it can be appreciated. I have some other contrivances of a similar nature, which it is my intention to prepare for your future amusement." (44.)

"Has the kite ever been applied to any useful purposes?" asked Tom.

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* From associations of an interesting nature connected with the residence of the author's children with kind and beloved friends for many a successive autumn.

"Certainly," answered his father. "It was by means of the kite that Dr Franklin was enabled to demonstrate the identity of electricity and the cause of lightning, and thus to disclose one of the most awful mysteries of nature."

"Pray do tell us something about this electrical kite," said Louisa.

"Not at present, my love; it would divert us too much from the subjects in which we are engaged; at some future period I shall have much pleasure in introducing you into these fairy regions of philosophy."

"I just now remember reading in Miss Edgeworth's 'Harry and Lucy,'" said Louisa, "something about a kite and Pompey's pillar."

"I am glad that you have reminded me of that story," replied Mr Seymour; "I will relate it to you. Some English sailors laid a wager that they would drink a bowl of punch on the summit of Pompey's pillar. Now, that pillar is almost a hundred feet high, and it is quite smooth, so that there was no way of climbing to the top, even for sailors, who are such experienced climbers: so they flew their kite exactly over the pillar, and when it came down on the opposite side, the string lay across the top of the capital. By means of this string, they pulled a small rope over, and by this a larger one, that was able to bear the weight of a man; a pulley was then fastened to the end of the large rope, and drawn close up to the upper edge of the capital; and then, you perceive, they could easily hoist each other up. They did more, for they hoisted the English flag on the top, and then drank the bowl of punch and won their wager."

"That is a very good story," said the vicar, "but I cannot help regretting that so much ingenuity and labour should not have had a nobler end to accomplish."

"There is some truth in that observation," said Mr Seymour, "and I will, therefore, relate another story which shall be more congenial to your heart, and in which the kite will present itself in a more interesting point of view; for, instead of enabling the sailors to drink a bowl of punch at an altitude otherwise inaccessible, we shall find it engaged in rescuing them from the horrors of shipwreck."*

"Pray proceed," said Tom.

"No, my dear, upon reflection, I think it will be better that we should postpone the story, until your return to the lodge, when you shall read it in 'Harry and Lucy.' But before we lose sight of the useful applications of the kite, let me tell you how greatly it served the Arctic voyagers in their late search after Franklin and his companions. By harnessing it to their sledges they were enabled to travel hundreds of miles over the ice before a stiff breeze. I will also point out to you, in the same work, an account of a new and useful application of the messenger, which will prove that the faculties of youth may be increased and improved by those very amusements which are too generally regarded as idle and unprofitable: I shall at the same time exhibit one or two experiments in illustration of the nature and causes of wind."

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* Transactions of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, vol. xli.; and Miss Edgeworth's Harry and Lucy, vol. iv. p. 188.

"Shall we not return immediately?"

"No, my dear; it would not be in my power to attend you at present; but join me in the library after dinner: Mr Twaddleton will now accompany me to the village, and do you remain and enjoy the amusement of your kite."

At the time appointed Tom and his sisters requested their father to fulfil the promises he had made them in the morning.

"You told us," said Louisa, "that you would give us some information about the wind; the subject has been puzzling me ever since, for I cannot make out the cause of it."

"Wind, my love, is nothing more than air in motion: and is produced by a large volume of it flowing in a current or stream, from one place or region to another, and with different velocities."

"And what can produce these currents?" asked Tom.

"After the explanation of the action of the pump, I do not think that I shall have much difficulty in making you understand the nature of the operations by which wind is occasioned. Suppose a partial vacuum should be formed in any region, would not the neighbouring air immediately rush in to supply the deficiency and restore the balance?"

"Undoubtedly; from the pressure of the air behind it."

"Heat," continued Mr Seymour, "will produce a partial vacuum by rarefying the air, and thus rendering it lighter; in consequence of which, it will ascend, and the colder air will rush in to supply its place."

"I do not exactly see why the rarefied air should ascend," observed Louisa: "it appears to offer an exception to the general law of gravity."

"Not at all; on the contrary, its ascent is occasioned by the force of gravity: in the first place, however, to prove the fact that heated air does actually ascend, we have only to observe the direction of smoke as it issues from the chimney; this consists of minute particles of fuel carried up, by a current of heated air, from the fire below; and as soon as this current is cooled by mixing with that of the atmosphere, the minute particles of coal fall, and produce the small black flakes which render the air, and everything in contact with it, so dirty in a populous city."

"But I want to know what it is which causes the hot air to ascend?"

"The greater weight of the cold air above it, which gets, as it were, beneath the lighter air, and obliges it to rise; just in the same way as a piece of cork, at the bottom of an empty vessel, is made to rise to the surface of the water which may be poured into it."

"Now I understand it; pray, therefore, proceed with your account of the wind. You have just said that heat rarefies the air, and causes it to ascend."

"And thus produces a current of air, or a *wind*."

"Is heat, then, the cause of wind?" asked Tom.

"It is one great cause; but there are, probably, several others; I will, however, exemplify this subject by an experiment."

So saying, Mr Seymour produced a water-plate, a large dish, and a jug filled with cold water. The bell was rung, and the servant entered with a tea-kettle of boiling water.

The large dish was then filled with the cold, and the water-plate with the boiling fluid.

"Let this large dish represent the ocean," said Mr Seymour, "and this water-plate, which I will now place in its centre, an island in that ocean; for the land, from receiving the rays of the sun, will be more heated than the water, and will consequently rarefy the air above it.—Now, Tom, light me the wax-taper."

"I have done so."

"Then now blow it out."

"I cannot imagine what you are about!—'Light the candle and then blow it out!'—but it still smokes; shall I put the extinguisher over it?"

"By no means; give it to me and observe what will happen when I carry it round the edge of the dish."

"Why, only see!" cried Tom; "Louisa has actually blown it in again. How could that happen?"

"Do not interrupt our experiment just now, and I will explain it afterwards. (45.) Now blow it out once more," said Mr Seymour.

"I have done so, and the smoke goes to the centre," exclaimed Tom.

"Showing, thereby, the existence of a current towards the water-plate, or island; in consequence of the air above it having been heated, and therefore rarefied. This explains, in a very satisfactory manner, a fact which may be constantly observed in our own climate, viz. a gentle breeze blowing from the sea to the land in the heat of the day. Upon the same principle it is, that most of the winds in different parts of the globe may be readily accounted for." (46)

"I suppose," said Tom, "that the air must rush with great velocity, in order to produce wind."

"A very general error prevails upon this subject: the rate of motion has been greatly exaggerated. In a brisk gale, even, the wind does not travel with such velocity but that it may be easily traced by the eye; and the sailor is able to watch its progress by the ripple which it produces on the sea."

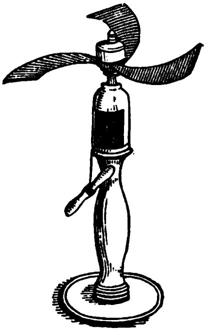
"Has, then, the rate of its motion ever been estimated?" asked Louisa.

"When its velocity is about two miles per hour, it is only just perceptible. In a high wind, the air travels thirty or forty miles in the same period. In a storm, its rate has been computed as being from sixty to eighty miles. It has also been ascertained, by experiment, that the air, as it rushes from a pair of blacksmith's bellows, has not a velocity above that of five-and-forty miles in the hour."

"At what rate should you think the air travelled this morning, when we flew our kite?" inquired Louisa.

"I should think at about five miles an hour, for it was a pleasant but gentle breeze."

Mr Seymour now, at the earnest request of the whole party, who had been on the tiptoe of expectation, produced his "FLYING-TOP," of which the reader is here presented with a representation.



"This little machine consists, as you may observe, of a flyer, with three vanes, the form of each being that of the segment of a circle, the obliquity of whose surface increases as it recedes from the centre of motion: this flyer, as you see, is attached to a spindle, around which the string that is to set it in motion is carefully wound, and the whole is adapted to a stand. Let us now join the vicar on the lawn, where we can conveniently put it into action."

The stump of a tree afforded a rest for the stand, which Mr Seymour held firmly in an inclined position with his left hand, while with his right he vigorously pulled the string. Away whirled the flyer, and in a second it rose majestically from the stand, and whizzing through the air, attained a very considerable altitude, no less to the astonishment than to the delight of the party. After several repetitions of the experiment, Mr Seymour thus proceeded to explain the philosophy of its flight.*

"After the explanation you have already received regarding the flight of a bird, you will very readily understand the question before us. It is evident that the oblique vanes, by striking the air during their rapid rotation, must produce a reaction on their under surfaces."

"Exactly so," cried Tom; "and if that reaction be greater than is sufficient to counteract its gravity, the flyer must ascend in the air, just as the bird does, in proportion to that excess."

"You are quite right," continued his father, "and I need hardly remind you of the importance of attending to the angular adjustment of the vanes to insure the greatest effect; it should be such as to make all the forces conspire, and you will recollect that the efficient force will be in a direction perpendicular to each inclined vane."

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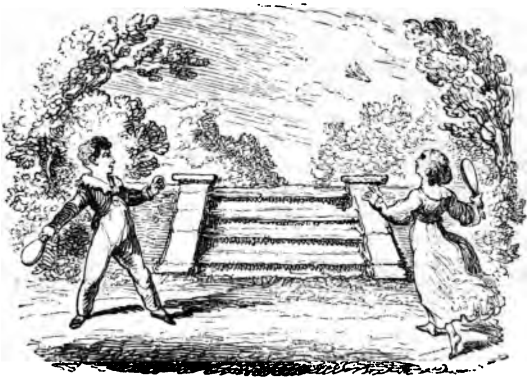
* Since the last edition of this work, a great improvement has been effected by rendering the *fly* independent of the *spindle*, so that being thus diminished in weight, its power of flight is greatly increased. At the same time, as the spindle remains in the stand, it is ready, without the trouble of rethreading it, for any future operations.



CHAPTER XVI.

MR TWADDLETON, on his arrival at the Lodge on the following morning, was informed that Miss Villers was expected at Overton in the evening.

"Your account of that young lady," observed the vicar, "has greatly prepossessed me in her favour; I only hope that she is not too *blue*."

"I care not how blue the stockings of a lady may be," said Mr Seymour, "'provided her petticoats be long enough to hide them;' and from my knowledge of Miss Villers, I can assure you, exalted as are her attainments, they are so veiled by feminine delicacy and reserve, that they may insidiously win, but will never extort our homage."

"Ay, ay," exclaimed the vicar; "I perfectly agree with you in your idea of feminine perfection—short tongues and long petticoats, Mr Seymour.—But where are my little playmates?"

"I left Tom and Fanny on the terrace, a short time since, very busily engaged in the game of shuttlecock and battledoor." *

"The shuttlecock is an ancient sport," observed Mr Twaddleton. "It is represented in a manuscript as far back as the fourteenth century: and it became a fashionable game amongst grown persons in the reign of James the First. In China the shuttlecock is made of feathers and lead, and is played by being struck up by the soles of the feet. A toy of this kind may be seen in the Ethnological Room in the British Museum."

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* SHUTTLECOCK, more correctly, perhaps, Shuttle*cork*, although Skinner thinks it is called *cock* from its feathers. *Battledoor*, so called from *Door*, taken for a flat board; and battle for striking; *i.e.*, a striking-board. Thomson thinks that the true derivation is from the Spanish *Batidor*, a beater or striker, and that the game was introduced from the Peninsula.

"It is a very healthy pastime," said Mr Seymour, "and, in my opinion, is admirably calculated for females; for it expands the chest, while it creates a graceful pliancy of the limbs."

"I entirely agree with you; it is the only game with which I am acquainted, in which muscular exercise is gained without compromising gracefulness. But see, here come the two young rogues."

"I have been considering whether there is any philosophy in the game of shuttlecock," exclaimed Tom.

"There are two circumstances connected with its flight, which certainly will admit of explanation upon scientific principles; and I should much like to hear whether you can apply them for that purpose. The first is its spinning motion in the air; the second, the regularity with which its base of cork always presents itself to the battledoor; so that, after you have struck it, it turns round, and arrives at your sister's battledoor in a position to be again struck by her, and sent back to you."

"I perfectly understand what you mean; but I really am not able to explain the motions to which you allude," said Tom.

"The revolution of the shuttlecock about its axis entirely depends upon the impulse of the wind on the oblique surfaces of its feathers; so that it is often necessary to trim the feathers of a new shuttlecock, before it will spin."

"I understand you; the force of the wind, by striking the oblique feathers, is resolved into a perpendicular and parallel force, as you explained to us when we considered the action of the wind upon the kite."

"Exactly; every oblique direction of a motion is the diagonal of a parallelogram, whose perpendicular and parallel directions are the two sides. Having settled this point, let us consider the second; viz., how it happens that the cork of the shuttlecock always presents itself to the battledore."

"I should think," said Tom, "that the cork points to the battledore for the same reason that the weathercock always points to the wind."

"Admirably illustrated!" exclaimed his father; "the cork will always go foremost, because the air must exert a greater force over the lighter feathers, and therefore retard their progress; but I must also direct your attention to the shape of the cork, which you may perceive to be *conical*, giving to the shuttlecock a readier passage through the air. Now this fact has an especial interest at the present time, from recent experiments showing the superior advantage of conical bullets in rifles; but we will talk to the major about it.* While we are upon this subject, I will introduce to your notice some contrivances which are indebted to this same principle for their operation. In the first place, there is the arrow; can you tell me, Louisa, the use of the feathers which are placed round its extremity?"

"To make its head proceed foremost in the air, by rendering its other end lighter, and therefore more sensible to the resistance of the air."

"Not exactly lighter," said her father; "but rather by giving to that end of it an increased resistance to the air, by which its forward course is retarded: that is, unquestionably, one of the objects of the wings of an arrow; but there is also another, that of *rifling* it, or steadying its progressive motion, by causing it to revolve around its axis. If you will look at this arrow, you will perceive that the feathers are placed nearly, but not quite, in planes passing through it: if the feathers were exactly in this plane, the air could not strike against their surfaces when the arrow is in motion: but since they are not perfectly straight, but always a little aslant, the air necessarily strikes them as the arrow moves forward; by which force the feathers are turned round, and with them the arrow or reed; so that a motion is generated about its axis; and its velocity will increase with the obliquity of the feathers. You will therefore observe that, in order to enable the feathers to offer a necessary resistance to the air, they must possess a certain degree of stiffness or inflexibility. It was on this account that Roger Ascham,† and other skilful artists in the days of archery, preferred the feathers of a goose of two or three years old, especially such as drop of themselves, for pluming the arrow; and the importance, as well as the theory of this choice, is confirmed by a curious observation of Gervase Markham,‡ who says that 'the peacock feather was sometimes used at the short butt; yet seldom or ever *did it keep the shaft either right or level!*'" (47.)

"That is intelligible enough," said Tom; "the feather of the peacock must have been so flexible as to have yielded to the slightest breath of air." Mr Seymour here observed that the Indians of the Amazon valley show their knowledge of the principle of *rifling*, in the way they feather their arrows. These feathers are generally from the wings of the macaw, and are secured spirally, so as to form a little screw on the base of the arrow, the effect of which is to make it revolve rapidly, and thus to keep it in a straight and direct course. Tom now requested that the action of the bow might be explained.

"I shall readily comply with your request before we part; but I am desirous, at present, of following up the subject before us, and of taking into consideration some other instruments which owe their motions to the action of the air upon oblique surfaces."

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* It would seem that the propelling force of the powder acts with greater advantage upon a bullet of conical form.

† Toxoph. ed. 1571, folio 166.

‡ Markham's Art of Archerie, 1634.

"You will hardly venture," said the vicar, "to explain to them the action of the wind upon the sails of the mill."

"I should like to hear something about the windmill," observed Tom: "and perhaps Mr Twaddleton can tell us who invented the machine."

"The invention is not of very remote date. According to some authors, windmills were first used in France in the sixth century; while others maintain that they were brought to Europe in the time of the Crusades, and that they had long been employed in the East, where the scarcity of water precluded the application of that powerful agent to machinery."

"I had intended," said Mr Seymour, "to have entered very fully upon the subject of the windmill; for although it is a very common machine, its construction is much more ingenious than is generally imagined; it must also be allowed to have a degree of perfection to which few of the popular engines have yet arrived; but to do ample justice to my subject, I should require several models which are not yet in readiness; besides, Tom's holidays have nearly passed away: I must, therefore, postpone the examination of the mill to some future opportunity, and content myself, at present, with an explanation of its sails."

"And let me tell you," observed the vicar, "that, if you encounter this subject, you will commence a task little less heroic than that which engaged the prowess of Don Quixote, and one which has occupied years of mechanical research. The angle which the surface of the sails ought to make with their axis, in order that the wind may have the greatest effect, or the degree of *weathering*, as the millwrights call it, is a matter of nice inquiry, and has much engaged the thoughts of the mathematicians."

"My remarks upon that subject will be very general," said Mr Seymour; "I shall explain the principle, without entering into the minutiæ of its applications. The vertical windmill, which is the kind in most common use, consists, as you well know, of an axis, or shaft, placed in the direction of the wind, and usually inclining a little upwards from the horizontal line. At one end of this, four long arms, or yards, are fixed perpendicular to the axis, and across each other at right angles: these afford a surface, on which a cloth can be spread to receive the action of the wind. To conceive why these sails should revolve by the force of the wind, we must have recourse to the theory of compound motion. It is very evident that, if a mill exposed directly to the wind should have its four sails perpendicular to the common axis in which they are fitted, they would receive the wind perpendicularly, an impulse which could only tend to overturn them;

there is a necessity, therefore, to have them oblique to the common axis, that they may receive the wind obliquely, when their effort to recede from it causes them to turn round with the axis; and the four sails, being all made oblique in the same direction, thus unite their efforts for the common object."

"You have not yet told us what degree of obliquity the sail ought to make with the wind," said the vicar.

"The same as the kite ought to make—*fifty-four* degrees and *forty-four* minutes."

"Do you not remember, when we were last in London, you pointed out to us a curious mill on the banks of the river, which went without any sails?"

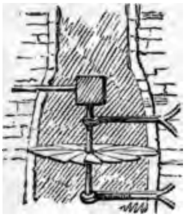
"You allude to the horizontal mill at Battersea."

"I remember it was at Battersea," observed Louisa; "and I dare say that you recollect the strange story which the waterman, who rowed us down the river, told Tom and myself. He said 'that, when the Emperor of Russia was in London, he took a fancy to the neat little church at Battersea, and determined to carry it off to Russia; and that for this purpose he had sent a large packing-case; but, as the inhabitants refused to let the church be carried away, the case remained on the spot where it was deposited.'"

"It is not a bad story," said her father; "for the mill certainly, both in size and figure, may be imagined to resemble a gigantic packing-case. The mill of which you are speaking has been taken down, in consequence of its use having been superseded by the introduction of steam. It was erected by Captain Hooper, who also built a similar one at Margate. It consisted of a circular wheel, having large boards or vanes fixed parallel to its axis, and arranged at equal distances from each other. Upon these vanes the wind could act, so as to blow the wheel round; but had it acted upon the vane at both sides of the wheel at once, it is evident that it could not have had any tendency to turn it round; hence, one side of the wheel was sheltered, while the other was submitted to the full action of the wind. For this purpose it was enclosed within a large cylindrical framework, furnished with doors or shutters, on all sides, to open at pleasure and admit the wind, or to shut and stop it. If all the shutters on one side were open, whilst all those on the opposite side were closed, the wind, acting with undiminished force on the vanes at one side, whilst the opposite vanes were under shelter, turned the mill round: but whenever the wind changed, the disposition of the blinds was altered, to admit the wind to strike upon the vanes of the wheel in the direction of a tangent to the circle in which they moved."

"Well; have you any other machine to explain to your scholars?" asked the vicar; "for I am anxious to present them with a bow and arrow which I have provided for their amusement."

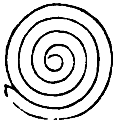
"I will, if you please, first describe to them the mechanism of the smock-jack; and I am desirous of doing so, as I have a very pleasing experiment to exhibit, which is founded upon the same principle."



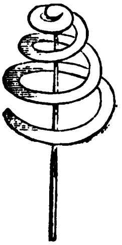
Mr Seymour then described the more common form of this machine. It consisted, he said, of a number of vanes of thin sheet-iron, arranged in a circle as here represented, but all set obliquely at a proper angle of inclination. Its action was explained in the following manner:—When a fire is kindled in the chimney, the air, which, by its rarefaction, immediately tends to ascend, strikes on the surfaces of the inclined vanes, and by a resolution of forces, similar to that already explained, causes the spindle, to which they are affixed, to turn round, and consequently communicates the same motion to the spit. The brisker the fire becomes, the quicker will the machine move, because in that case the air ascends with greater rapidity.

"I will now exhibit to you a mechanical amusement which is founded on the same principle. Fetch me the piece of pasteboard which lies on the library table."

The pasteboard was produced, and Mr Seymour described upon it a spiral, similar to that which is represented in the annexed figure.



The spiral was cut out and extended, by raising the centre above the first revolution. It was then suspended upon a small spit of iron, which had been previously prepared, by applying the centre or summit of its spiral to its point. The whole was now placed on the top of a warm stove (the application of a lamp would have answered the same purpose), and the machine, to the great delight and astonishment of the children, soon put itself in motion, and turned without the assistance of any apparent agent.



The agent, however, in this case, was the air, which, being rarefied by the contact of a warm body, ascended, and thus produced a current. The accompanying sketch may render this experiment more intelligible to the reader.

The vicar observed, "that, to him, the experiment was perfectly novel; although he remembered having seen what he now supposed must have been a similar contrivance, but which, until that moment, he had always considered as the effect of clock-work."

"And what might that have been?" asked Mr Seymour.

"The revolution of a serpent, which I noticed in several windows in London, during a late illumination."

"Undoubtedly; it was nothing more than a spiral, so painted as to resemble that reptile, and which owed its motion to the action of the air heated by a lamp placed beneath it."

"Now, then," exclaimed the vicar, "let us direct our attention to the bow and arrow; see the present I have provided for you, Tom!"

So saying, the worthy clergyman produced a bow and a number of arrows, together with a target; which, at his desire, had been sent from London.

"To cultivate a sympathy between the eye and hand, which can never be so faithfully established as in early life, constitutes a very essential element of education. I therefore consider archery, as not only an agreeable, but an instructive pastime," said Mr Seymour.

"I think," observed Mrs Seymour, "that you should accompany your gift with some account of archery, or the art and exercise of shooting with the bow and arrow."

"That will I readily do," replied Mr Twaddleton; who accordingly proceeded as follows:—

"The bow is the most ancient and universal of all weapons, and has been found to obtain amongst the most barbarous and remote nations. In the days of David the practice of the bow would appear to have been so general, that it was not unfrequently made use of as a figure of speech. Israel, when blessing his sons, says of Joseph, 'the *archers* have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his *bow* abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.'"

"Its earliest application was probably for the purpose of obtaining food," observed Mr Seymour.

"Your conjecture has the weight of testimony," replied the vicar: "when Isaac sent Esau to the forest, he said, 'Take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver, and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison:'* and it is even a question whether the *Saxon* bow was ever used by the Anglo-Saxons and Danes for any other purpose than that of procuring food or pastime; for the representation of this bow, in an ancient manuscript † of the tenth century, shows it to have been very differently constructed from what one might expect in a military weapon; in size, too, it was a mere toy, compared with the bow of succeeding ages. In the reign of Henry the First, the practice of archery was greatly encouraged, and even protected by statute, for it was provided that, if any one in practising with arrows or darts should by accident slay another, it was not to be visited as a crime."

"There can be no doubt that the bow and arrow was employed for the purpose of killing animals for food from the earliest times; but its principal interest is derived from its military applications: will you, therefore, give us a sketch of its history, and confine yourself to its practice as a warlike instrument in England!"

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* Gen. xlix. 23, 24.

† MS. Cott. Claud. B. IV.

"And may I also beg of you, my dear Sir," added Mrs Seymour, "to explain the different terms which are employed to denote its parts and applications? Such information will be, just now, highly acceptable to me, as I am reading some romances, in which those terms are constantly occurring."

"You shall be obeyed, madam," replid the vicar, with a courteous smile.

"We are, probably, indebted to the Norman conquest for the introduction of the bow and arrow as a hostile weapon; but, before I enter upon that subject, it is necessary to state, that the bows in use in England have been of two kinds, the common or *long* bow, and the *cross* bow. The former does not require any description from me; the latter, or *Arbalet*, as it was called, (from *Arbalesta*, i.e., *arcubalista*, a bow with a sling,) consists of a steel bow, fastened upon a stock, and is discharged by means of a catch, or *trigger*, which probably gave rise to the lock upon the modern musket."

"Excuse the interruption," said Mrs Seymour; "but do allow me to ask whether *Arquebusade* does not derive its name from its having been formerly applied to wounds inflicted by the cross-bow or *Arbalet?*"

"I thank you madam; that etymology is entirely new to me, and will explain the medical name *Aqua vulneraria*, which has been applied to that spirit."

The vicar now proceeded without further interruption.

"The invention of cross-bows is said by ancient writers to have come from the Sicilians. They were first used in England by the Normans at the battle of Hastings; and a *quarrel* or *bar-bolt* (which is synonymous with the arrow of the long-bow) was the immediate cause of Harold's death. In the reign of Stephen, in 1139, the second council of Lateran prohibited their use; and some historians assert, that they were not again used in this country till the reign of Richard I., whose death, occasioned by one at Chaluz, was considered as a judgment on his impiety. From the death of Richard till the splendid victories of Edward III., we hear little of the cross-bow as a military weapon. Its use appears to have been principally confined to the sieges of fortified places, and to sea-fights. In 1346, at the battle of Cressy, a large body of Genoese soldiers, who were particularly expert in its management, were in the service of the French; but at the commencement of the action, a sudden shower wetted the strings and prevented the archers from doing their usual execution, while the English were still capable of annoying their enemies by the long-bow with complete success; both this victory and that of Poictiers, ten years afterwards, were chiefly ascribed by the English to their archers. In 1403, at the battle of Shrewsbury, where Hotspur was slain, the archers on both sides did terrible execution; and the victory of Agincourt, in 1415, was entirely owing to their skill. Under Edward IV. an ordinance was made, that every Englishman and Irishman, dwelling in England, should have a bow of his own height, to be made of yew, wych, hazel, ash, or any other seasonable tree, according to their power. By Henry VII. and his son Henry VIII. the use of the cross-bow was entirely forbidden; and a penalty of ten pounds was to be inflicted on every man in whose house one might be found. From this time they seem to have been chiefly used for killing deer.* Henry VIII. compelled every father to provide a long-bow and two arrows for his son at seven years old. Edward VI., Elizabeth, and James, all encouraged archery; John Lyon, who founded Harrow School in 1590, two years before his death, drew up rules for its direction, whereby the amusements of the scholars were confined to 'driving a top, tossing a hand-ball, running, and shooting.' The last-mentioned diversion is in a manner insisted on by the founder, who requires all parents to furnish their children with bow-string, shafts, and tresters, to exercise shooting. A silver arrow used some years ago to be shot for by the young gentlemen of that school."

The vicar concluded, and received the thanks of the party for the interesting information he had afforded them.

"There is one circumstance connected with the military history of the long-bow," said Mrs Seymour, "which has somewhat surprised me; and that is, why it should so long have continued in estimation after the use of gunpowder."

"That circumstance," replied her husband, "will cease to astonish you, when you remember that, until the last century, muskets were very unwieldy instruments; they were never used without a rest, had no bayonets, and could not be so frequently discharged as they are at present."

"Come," said the vicar, "I perceive that the children are impatient to try their skill with their new instrument; let us walk out, and I will play the Scythian† upon this occasion."

"Now, Tom," cried Mr Twaddleton, "we must have an object. Let me see. Shall it be the '*but*,' '*pricke*,' or '*roaver*'?‡ Come, try whether you can hit yonder gate-post. Take your bow, and here is an arrow."

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* See Shakspeare's Henry VI.

† The ancient nobility of Greece were instructed by the Scythians in the use of the bow, which in those days passed for a most princely education.—*Potter, Arch. Græc.* tom. ii. l. iii. cap. 4. *Aquin. Lex. Milit.* ii. 260.

‡ The '*but*' was a level mark; the '*pricke*,' a mark of compass, but certain in its distance; the '*roaver*' was a mark of uncertain length.

Tom took the bow, and, placing the arrow on the string, was about to draw the latter, when the vicar exclaimed, "Stop—stop; you must pull back your hand to your right ear, in order to shoot the arrow; whereas you have placed the bow directly before you, and are about to return your hand to the right breast."

"I thought," said Tom, "that was the proper position; for I remember reading of the Amazonian women, who are said to have parted with their right breasts, lest they should prove an impediment to their using the bow."

"I do not mean to assert," replied the vicar, "that there is not ample classical authority for your proceeding. The Amazons undoubtedly shot their arrows in such a position; and so, in truth, did the primitive Grecians;* although the ancient Persians drew the arrow to the ear, according to the fashion of later ages, and which I greatly prefer for its superior convenience. In all the Assyrian sculptures in the British Museum, it may be seen that the arrow is universally drawn to the ear or cheek. You may also recollect, as you have been lately reading 'The Tales of a Grandfather,' that the superiority of the English archers was ascribed to this mode of using their bows; the words of Sir W. Scott, if I rightly recollect, are these:—'The archers of England were taught to draw the bowstring to their right ear, while other European nations only drew it to the breast.' Now," continued the vicar, "if you try the difference of these postures, you will find that a much longer arrow can be drawn to the ear than to the breast, because the right arm has more room."

The party now amused themselves for some time; each shooting in his turn at the mark which was chosen for the trial; and with a success which, considering it was their first attempt, the vicar declared to be "quite marvellous, and that Tom would in time become a second Eurytus." †

At the conclusion of the sport, Mr Twaddleton informed his friends that parochial duties required his attendance at the vestry, but Mr Seymour told him that he should expect his company in the evening.

It was just six o'clock, when the sound of the porter's bell, and the rolling of carriage-wheels, announced the approach of some important stranger to the Lodge. It was Miss Villers. Were this a romance rather than an instructive history, we should at once charge our pencil with the glowing hues of the rainbow, and proceed to colour the outline which the imagination of the reader must have already sketched: but the character of the present composition fortunately renders such a task unnecessary: we say "fortunately," for the magazines of romance have actually become insolvent from the numerous and heavy drafts of the novel-writer; the regions of fancy have been so despoiled of their blossoms, that scarcely a flower can be culled by him who would entwine a garland for the brow of his heroine; and such even as may have escaped the grasp of this voracious horde, will be found to have faded under the withering influence of those insects of literature, which, fluttering or creeping about their petals, have rendered their fragrance pestilential, and turned their honey into bitterness. We might indicate her damask lip, as the arched bow of Cupid, which shot an unerring dart whenever a smile relaxed its tension; we might, like Ovid, praise the dimple of her cheek, as the impress of Love's finger; we might describe the perfect symmetry of her form, but what language could convey to the mind's eye the witcheries with which the Graces had surrounded it? We might depict the features of her countenance, but how could we catch and fix the varying expressions which lighted it up with the magic glow of intelligence? We might—but enough; let us exercise the judgment of Timanthes, and leave the reader to the sway of his own imagination.

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* Thus, Pandarus in his fourth Iliad:—

"Close to his *breast* he strains the nerve below,
Till the barb's point approach the circling bow."

† The king of Œchalia, famous for his skill in archery.—*Odyss.* xiii.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the following morning, Miss Villers, accompanied by her friends, proceeded to Osterley Park, to pay her compliments to Major Snapwell, and to add her entreaties to those of Mr and Mrs Seymour to induce the venerable major to spend a few days at Overton Lodge. The children, of course, had a holiday; but was it a holiday? Tom and his sister have been frequently heard to declare that they never passed a more dull and listless day; and on resuming their scientific sports, their manner sufficiently testified that increased pleasure which always accompanies our return to an agreeable occupation.

"Mr Twaddleton," said Miss Villers, addressing the worthy vicar as he entered the library at Overton, "I am happy to say that Major Snapwell has consented to pass a few days with us; but to this promise he has annexed a condition; and I hope you will cheerfully ratify the agreement of which I have ventured to approve. It is that our party should return with him to Osterley Park, and assist in planning and laying out his flower garden, which I must admit is, at present, in a very disorderly and undisciplined condition."

"Ha! ha! ha!—The vicar of Overton, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, turned Gentleman Usher in the Court of Flora!—Well, well! be it even so—I am content," said the vicar, "sheltered as I shall be under the hallowed wings of Lord Bacon, Evelyn, Pope, Addison, and Shenstone, all of whom, with a host of other eminent men, have delighted in the cultivation of the flower-garden. As for myself, I am a true lover of flowers, not only for their beauty, of which I am keenly sensible, but for their cheering influence upon the poor invalid, languishing on the bed of sickness. You may well suppose, my dear lady, that as a Christian minister I can testify to their soothing and consolatory influence.—How often have I during my parochial visits seen the languid eye brighten, the cheek glow, and the smile of pleasure animate the pallid countenance, as I placed on the pillow a bouquet of flowers, fresh from the garden, and steeped in all the richness of their native fragrance! They were welcomed as the emblems of hopeful promise, breathing, as it were, their healthy freshness upon the decaying frame of the sufferer; and arousing the faltering powers of life through the influence of a mysterious sympathy."

"I never heard a more eloquent and passionate appeal in favour of flowers," said Miss Villers.

"We must also enlist the young people into our service upon this occasion," observed the vicar; "for, if I recollect correctly, Xenophon in his Cyropædia represents the study of flowers as an important branch of the education of the Persian youth. I have always thought that by an early cultivation of the love of flowers, we invest a store of intellectual wealth, which may be discounted with great advantage in the later stages of life."

"I am no stranger," replied Miss Villers, "to the scheme in which, with Mr Seymour, you have been so laudably engaged, to divest science of its sterner aspect: it is a subject which greatly interests me, and I shall be most happy in being allowed to become one of your pupils: nor am I unacquainted, Sir, with the advantages which your antiquarian knowledge has conferred; you have garnished the intellectual banquet with some of the choicest flowers of literature, and clothed the mouldering remains of former times with a reviving verdure."

"You do me far too much honour, madam," said the vicar, as a gracious smile flitted over his countenance; "but I rejoice to find that you attach a becoming importance to the researches of the antiquary. May I be allowed to hope that you will favour me with a visit to the vicarage, and inspect my poor collection of antiques?"

"I anticipate a great treat, I do assure you," said Miss Villers; "but you speak too humbly of a collection which, the major informs me, contains some of the rarest relics of ancient days."

"The major, madam, is, no doubt, a judge, an excellent judge, madam, although he is occasionally——but no matter—no matter. I certainly, as he justly says, do possess some few remarkable specimens. I have, for instance, an undoubted specimen of the leathern money coined by John of France; some very tolerable samples of tapestry of the 'high and low warp:' a rare specimen of the '*plate armour*,' of Edward the Third; a series of sigilla or seals; as well as an interesting collection of impressions in wax, taken from grants of William the Conqueror, and, what is curious, the colour of these waxen impressions is green, with a view, as it has been said, to signify that the acts should for ever continue fresh and in force."

"You remind me of the symbolical interpretation of colours," said Miss Villers, "which has lately engaged my attention; and I have learnt that the colour of the falling leaf led certain nations to adopt yellow as the symbol of mourning."

"More poetical than just," observed the vicar, "for be assured, my dear lady, that black is indicated by nature as the garb of mourning. It is felt by the senses, and acknowledged by science. It is the emblem of darkness, excluding that joy which light universally imparts. It is the emphatic emblem of death; for, were the emanations from the sun suspended, even for a few seconds, all nature would return to chaos. But, quitting this digression, let me resume the thread of our discourse. We were speaking, I think, about my collection at the vicarage. Well, let me consider; what other curiosities have I to display for your amusement and approbation? Rock-basins? yes, the rock-basins from Carnbreh. Ay, madam, you will be quite astonished at a specimen which"— At this instant, Mr and Mrs Seymour, followed by the children, entered the apartment, and abruptly cut the thread of the vicar's harangue.

"What do I hear?" exclaimed Mr Seymour: "rock-basins! for mercy's sake, my dear vicar, let us not again dive into those horrid basins of Druidism; I verily believe you would willingly go to the stake in defence of those supposed pools of lustration."

"Well, well," replied the vicar, pettishly; "let us drop the disputed subject, as I have another treasure lately obtained from Cornwall, which you have not yet seen—a sepulchral stone!—'*In vestibulo astat*,' as the poet has it."

"Why, I never observed it as I passed through the entrance," said Mr Seymour.

"Excuse me," observed the vicar, "the *Vestibule*, if you please. You doubtless know it was a custom amongst the Romans to have an altar sacred to Vesta in the entrance of their houses, and hence the term. But I beg a thousand pardons—'*venia sit dicto*'—I am, perhaps, too critical."

"Not only pardon, but thanks, my dear Sir, for the information you have afforded us," said Mr Seymour, in a tone of conciliation.

Miss Villers was now invited to be present at one of the scientific conversations.

"I shall be grateful to you for so pleasing a privilege," observed the young lady; "and," continued she, "may I be allowed to ask whether you have not been lately teaching my young friends the operation of those various toys which act by the force of the air? the object I have in view in asking this question you shall presently hear."

"We have been lately taught the reason of the kite's ascent, and the action of the squirt, sucker, and pump," said Tom.

"So I understood; and before you proceed with your sportive philosophy, I hope your father will allow you to try whether you can solve an enigma I have composed for you!"

"A riddle!" exclaimed Louisa; "how delightful! Pray read it, and let us try to discover its meaning."

Her father then opened the paper with which Miss Villers had presented him, and read as follows:—

"Mortal, wouldst thou know my name,
Scan the powers I proudly claim.
O'er this globe's capacious round
With fairy sprightliness I bound;

O'er sea and land my power extends,
To every herb my care descends.
Did I withhold my vital breath,
Nature's forms would sink in death.
When confin'd, or swiftly driven
By angry spirits in the heaven,
My wrath in thunders I make known,
And discord claims me as her own.
'Tis love of freedom makes me wild,—
When uncontroll'd, my nature's mild;
And oft the nymph, in dewy grot,
Seeks solace from my plaintive note;
O'er lovers' graves I waft a sigh,
And breathe the sound of sympathy.
And know, ye sons of Albion's isle,
That when the Hero of the Nile,
Midst crowds with mournful pomp array'd,
In the cold lap of Earth was laid,
I sympathised with Britain's tear,
And waved the banner o'er his bier.
'Tis I who from the trembling lyre
Breathe tones of love and soft desire;
'Tis I, the spirit of the shell,
Who fill with notes the listening dell;
And when the war-trump sounds alarm,
'Tis I who summon men to arm.
Made captive by the arts of man,
My various services began;
To grind his corn, to drain his lands,
I soon was task'd to spare his hands.
Should he to foreign climes proceed,
He yokes me like the neighing steed,
And, by my quick but easy motion,
He traverses the stormy ocean.
His children, too, my presence court,
To give them toys, and make them sport;
Without my aid their kites would lie
As useless weights that ne'er could fly;
Their humming-tops would soundless spin,
Unless I breathed a spell within.
The modest maid, without my power,
Would wither like her kindred flower.
Unless my cup of sweets she sips,
Where are the rubies of her lips?
Unless my glowing rouge she seeks,
Where are the roses of her cheeks?
What art again can strew her tresses
With half the grace my skill possesses?
Ev'n goddesses are represented
In draperies which I invented.
Sometimes, 'tis true, I am so frail
As ruffian-like to raise your veil,
And thus to curious man reveal
The charms you modestly conceal.
Revenge the deed. Announce my name,
For now you know the powers I claim."

"Let me consider," said Tom, thoughtfully; "it grinds our corn, and drains the land—why, that must be a mill."

"Nonsense!" cried Louisa, "how can a mill carry our ships across the sea?—perhaps it is canvas," said she, at the same time casting an inquiring glance at the vicar, which the reverend gentleman gravely recognised, by exclaiming, "*Davus sum, non Œdipus.*" At that moment Miss Villers whispered in the ear of her little favourite, who shortly afterwards exultingly pronounced it to be AIR. "To be sure," said Tom, "but air in motion—it is WIND."

The juvenile group now attentively perused the enigma, in order to discover whether its different parts would admit of such an interpretation. As soon as they arrived at the passage in which was described the waving of the banners over the bier of Nelson, Mr Seymour interrupted them.

"It so happened," said he, "that I was present during the awful ceremony of Nelson's interment in St Paul's; and never shall I forget the thrilling effect which was produced on the assembled multitude, by the solemn movement of the banners in the dome, as the bier slowly advanced along the nave of the cathedral; and which was accidentally occasioned by a current of air from the western entrance, although, to the eye of fancy, it seemed as if some attendant spirit had directed the colours, under which the hero had bled and conquered, to offer this supernatural testimony of respect and sorrow."

Miss Villers observed that Louisa had unquestionably solved the riddle.

"And pray, my dear Mr Twaddleton," said Mrs Seymour, "what say you to these puzzles and rhyming conundrums? Do you hold them in as much horror as you would so many puns?"

"By no means, my good madam. An enigma is a perfectly orthodox species of composition; and is, indeed, sanctioned by the highest authorities of antiquity."

"I believe," observed Mr Seymour, "that the pastime of riddle-making was extremely popular amongst the Grecians. Plutarch, if I remember correctly, has told us that the girls of his time worked at knitting or sewing, and that the most ingenious amongst them 'made riddles.'"

"The most ancient riddle on record," replied the vicar, "is to be found in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Judges."

"We have also numerous riddles in profane writers of ancient date," observed Mr Seymour.

"Did you ever read of that invented by Cleobulus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, who lived 570 years before Christ?" inquired the vicar.

"Pray be so kind as to relate it," said Tom.

Mr Twaddleton, in compliance with this request, proceeded as follows:—

"There is a father with twice six sons: these sons have each thirty daughters, who are parti-coloured, having one cheek white, the other black. They never see each other's faces, nor live above twenty-four hours."

"A very strange and unsociable family!" observed Louisa.

"I should never guess it," said Tom, "if I were to try for a whole year."

"You have, nevertheless, my boy, just pronounced the name of the said father, and that, too, after a single moment's consideration," replied the vicar.

"The name of the father? how? where?"

"It is a YEAR!"

"A year!" exclaimed the astonished boy.

"A year!" echoed Louisa; "to be sure it is; I now see it all clearly. His 'twice six sons' are the twelve months; the 'thirty daughters' the days of each month; and, since one day must necessarily pass away before the next can arrive, they may be truly said never to see each other's faces."

"Admirably expounded!" cried the vicar.

"And each day," added Tom, "is certainly 'parti-coloured,' as it is made up of light and darkness."

The vicar here observed that the classical myth of Castor and Pollux, who were said "to live and die alternately," would admit of a similar interpretation. "According to Eustathius," said he "they represented the two hemispheres of the world, the one of which being enlightened by the sun, the other must consequently be at that time in darkness. Homer thus alludes to them:—

'And live alternate, and alternate die:
In hell beneath, on earth, in heaven above,
Reign the twin gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.'"[*]

Mr Seymour here informed the party that it was his intention to enter upon the consideration of such toys as produced sounds.

"I suppose you mean the whistle, whizgig, and humming-top," observed Tom.

"Your papa, no doubt, alludes to the *crepundia*[†] of classical recollections," said the vicar, "and I greatly approve of the arrangement; since our last lecture embraced the operations of the atmosphere, a subject with which the nature of sound is intimately connected."

"We have lately considered the phenomenon of wind, as produced by the motions of the atmosphere, and I now propose to investigate another species of agitation of which the air is susceptible, a kind of vibratory or tremulous motion, which, striking on the drum of the ear, produces SOUND."

"Is it the air which produces sound?" said Louisa, with much surprise; "I thought it was always occasioned by the vibrations of solid bodies. Well do I remember, when Tom struck the finger-glass, that you immediately silenced the sound by placing your hand upon it, and which you told us stopped the vibration of the glass, and so destroyed the sound."

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[*] Odyss. xi.

[†] "CREPUNDIA," noisy toys. They were carried with the bride's utensils, in procession to her husband's house, in anticipation, no doubt, of a rising generation.

"You speak the truth, but not the whole truth," replied her father. "Sound is undoubtedly the result of certain motions or vibrations, produced in sonorous bodies, but these vibrations are communicated to the air, and from thence to the ear, in a manner which I shall presently explain."

"Do you mean to say, that, if air were entirely excluded, bodies would be incapable of producing sound when struck?"

"Not exactly. Air is the usual conductor of sound, and, unless some other medium be substituted, the removal of it would prevent a sonorous body from communicating any sensation to the ear. Liquids, however, are capable of conveying the vibratory motion to the organ of hearing; for sound can be heard under water, as well as conveyed along its surface. (48.) With a wide unbroken expanse of sea, sounds may be heard at great distances, provided there is nothing to check them, until they are reflected to the ear from the sails. A ship's company has distinctly distinguished the bells of Rio Janeiro, when seventy miles distant from the coast. Solid bodies will also convey it, and in a much more perfect and rapid manner: thus the slightest scratch with a pin, upon one end of a long piece of timber, will be distinctly heard on applying the ear to its opposite extremity. The trampling of a horse is to be perceived at a greater distance by listening with the ear in contact with the ground, than by attending to the sound conveyed through the air; and hence, amongst many eastern tribes, it is a common practice to ascertain the approach of an enemy, by applying the ear to the ground. Upon the same principle, if we place our ear against a long brick wall, and desire a person at a considerable distance to strike it *once* with a hammer, it will be heard *twice*, the first sound travelling along the wall, the second through the air." (49.)

"I thank you for that hint," said the vicar. "I now understand the principle of a new instrument which Dr Doseall employs for examining the pulsations of the heart. He places the end of a wooden rod upon the breast, and applying the other extremity to his ear, declares that the sounds, thus conveyed to it, enable him to form the most accurate opinion in cases of diseased chest."

"In the same manner," observed Mrs Seymour, "that you may hear the boiling of the tea-kettle, by placing the end of the poker on the vessel, and applying your ear to the handle."

"You will hereafter witness a curious exhibition, in further illustration of this law of *conduction*," said the vicar, "termed the TELEPHONIC CONCERT."

"I do not exactly understand what you mean by a *sonorous* body. Will not every body produce a sound when struck?" asked Fanny.

"Those bodies are called *sonorous* which produce clear, distinct, regular, and durable sounds, such as a bell, a drum, musical strings, wind instruments, and so on."

"And upon what does this peculiar property depend?" inquired Tom.

"Before I answer that question, I must explain the supposed nature of these vibrations of the air, upon which sound depends; you will then readily perceive why one species of matter should be better calculated than another for exciting them. It is generally believed that sound is conveyed through air by a succession of pulsations similar to those which are occasioned on the surface of smooth water by throwing a pebble into it. This at first produces a small circular wave round the spot in which the stone falls; the wave spreads, and gradually communicates its motion to the adjacent waters, producing similar waves to a considerable extent. The same kind of waves are produced in the air by the motion of a sonorous body, which will of course be in the centre, and the waves or pulsations will diminish in strength as they recede from that centre, until at last they become so weak and attenuated as to be inaudible to human ears."

"When I strike a bell, do I produce exactly the same motion in the air, that I do in the water by throwing a stone into it?" asked Louisa.

"With this difference," replied her father, "that, as air is an elastic fluid, the motion does not consist of regularly-extending waves, but of vibrations, which are composed of a motion forwards and backwards: the undulations of the air differ also from those of the water, in not being confined to a plane, but in diverging in all directions from the centre; or, in other words, the aërial undulations are spherical."

"It is a very puzzling subject," cried Tom.

"I cannot understand," said Louisa, "how the motion of the air can extend so as to convey sound to a distance, if, as you say, the air moves backwards as well as forwards."

"I see your difficulty, and will endeavour to remove it: attend to me. The first set of undulations which are produced immediately around the sonorous body, by pressing against the contiguous air, condense it. The condensed air, though impelled forward by the pressure, reacts on the first set of undulations, driving them back again. The second set, which have been put in action, in their turn, communicate their motion, and are themselves driven back by reaction. Thus there is a succession of waves in the air, corresponding with the succession of waves in the water."

"Now I understand why sound requires some time to travel from a distant object to the ear, as you explained to us upon a former occasion,"* said Louisa.

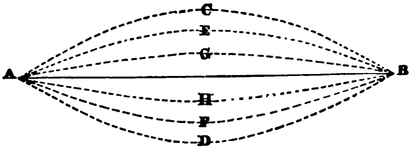
"But you have not yet told us what renders a body sonorous," observed Tom.

"Its elasticity: a ball of damp clay, which does not possess this property, will produce no other sound when struck, but that which arises from the condensation of the small portion of air between the clay and the hammer which strikes it. A hollow ball of brass will produce more sound, because it is elastic; but still very little effect will arise from this, since a ball is the worst shape for admitting of vibration, on account of its forming an arch or dome, in every direction, so that one part stiffens and sustains the other: but if such a ball be divided, and the edge of one half of it struck, a loud, clear, and distinct tone will be produced; because a hemisphere will admit of the exertion of elasticity, or of momentary change of figure, which is conducive to the perfection of sound; and accordingly the bells used for clocks, and for musical purposes, have generally such a figure."

"I see, clearly," said Louisa, "that it is the vibration of a sonorous body that communicates the necessary motions to the air; and I suppose that a body vibrates in proportion to its elasticity."

"Certainly it does: but to render this subject still more intelligible, I have prepared a diagram."

Mr Seymour then exhibited a figure, of which the annexed is a copy, and proceeded to explain it in the following manner:—



"You are well aware that an elastic body, after having been struck, not only returns to its former situation, but, having acquired momentum by its velocity, like the pendulum or swing,* springs out on the opposite side. If, then, I draw the string A B, which is made fast at both ends, to C, it will not only return to its original position, but proceed onwards to D. This is the first vibration, at the end of which it will retain sufficient velocity to bring it to E, and back again to F, which constitutes its second vibration, the third vibration will carry it only to G and H and so on, till the resistance of the air destroys its motion."

"That is exactly like the swing or pendulum," said Tom.

"As you are struck with the resemblance, take care and preserve the remembrance of it; for I shall hereafter have occasion to revert to it."

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* See page 29. † See page 122 *et seq.*

"As I now understand how sound is produced and carried to a distance, I should much like to learn the cause of different tones," said Louisa.

"Fond as you are of music, my dear Louisa, I am not surprised at the wish you have just expressed to become acquainted with the nature of musical sounds; I shall, therefore, endeavour to convey, in as simple a manner as possible, the theory which has been proposed for their explanation. I think you will immediately perceive that, if the aërial waves, which I have endeavoured to describe, should be irregular, or run into each other, there must arise a confusion of sounds; thus *discords* may be readily imagined to be produced whenever a second vibration shall commence before the first is finished, so as to meet it half-way on its return, and interrupt it in its course. In like manner may we conceive the general nature of those arrangements upon which *unison* and *concord* depend; where the vibrations are performed in equal times, the same tone is produced by both, and they are said to be in *unison;* but *concord,* as you well know, is not confined to unison, for two different tones harmonise in a variety of cases. If, for example, the particles of one sonorous body vibrate in double the time of another, the second vibration of the latter will strike the ear at the same instant as the first vibration of the former; and this is the 'concord of an *octave*.' When the vibrations are as 2 to 3, the coincidence will be at every third vibration of the quickest, which, therefore, is the next degree of perfection, and is called a '*diapente*,' or 'fifth,' while the vibration of 3 to 4 will produce the '*diatessaron*,' or 'fourth;' but this and the next which follow in order are not so agreeable to the judicious ear, and are therefore called '*imperfect concords;*' while discord is produced by the vibrations confusedly interfering with each other."

Louisa here inquired whether the difference in the acuteness of a sound did not depend upon the nature of the vibrations; and her father, in reply, stated that it depended entirely upon the degree of quickness with which the vibrations were performed: the slower the vibration, the graver the tone; the quicker, the more acute.*

"But, if I strike any one note of the instrument repeatedly, whether quickly or slowly, it always gives the same tone," observed Louisa.

"To understand that fact," replied her father, "you must remember that the vibrations of bodies are regulated by laws very similar to those of the pendulum; consequently the duration of the vibrations of strings or chords depends upon their length and thickness; for if two strings of equal magnitude, but with their lengths as 2 to 1, be equally stretched, their vibrations will be in the same ratio; therefore, the shortest will make two vibrations, while the longest makes one; but the vibrations of the same string will always be the same whether it be struck quickly or slowly, upon the principle of the *isochronous* property of the pendulum, already described. It is also worthy of remark that however much the sound-vibrations may vary in quickness, or pitch, they travel forward at the same rate of progression; for in a ring of bells, the sound of every tone is heard at two or three miles' distance, in the same order that the bells are struck; and so it is with music, distance may render it fainter, but it does not alter the tune."*

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* The number of vibrations made by the wings of insects, as before stated, has been ingeniously deduced from the tone which they produce.

"Let us now take leave of this subject, for I am quite sure that my young friends have already received more than they can profitably carry away," said the vicar.

"I submit, my good Sir; and in return for my compliance, use your influence with Miss Villers, and induce her to favour us with a practical illustration of our subject upon the pianoforte."

"Most cheerfully; but my intercession is quite unnecessary, for I am sure that our fair friend is no disciple of Tigellius."†

"I am ever ready, Sir, to comply with the wishes of those I respect. I consider the caprice which our sex too often displays upon these occasions, as not only a breach of good taste, but an evidence of unpardonable vanity."

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* Certain experiments have, however, shown the necessity of more accurately determining the velocity of sound. There is reason to believe that loud travel faster than low sounds.—ED.

† Horat. Sat. lib. i. sat. 3.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER the several conversations related in the foregoing pages, the reader will not be surprised to find that the opinion of the vicar regarding the superior attainments of Miss Villers, had daily acquired an increasing ascendancy; and had that lady been free and disengaged, and could "dear Mr Twaddleton" have obtained a slice of one of those Scandinavian apples to which Mr Seymour had lately alluded, we are by no means sure, in spite of his bachelor tendencies, that the current of his admiration might not have murmured in a softer channel—but that is beside our present purpose. We only desire to impress upon our readers the high amount of respect he entertained for her abilities and judgment; and it was under such a conviction that he was induced to submit a question which gave rise to the learned discussion we are now about to relate.

"Pray, Miss Villers," said the vicar, "may I be allowed to inquire whether, amidst your diversified pursuits, you have ever directed your inquiries into the nature of ancient music? I have long been convinced that it must have been very superior in power and effect to that of modern times, although I am well aware that our friend Mr Seymour entertains a very different opinion; and, with his usual banter, tells me, that all my *crotchets* are of the old school."

"Upon a question of such doubt and difficulty, I feel that it would ill become a person of my very limited knowledge to offer an opinion; although," added Miss Villers, "I am willing to confess that the subject has not entirely escaped my attention; and you could not afford me a greater gratification than by clearing up some of those doubts which have perplexed me. It is, I believe, admitted, that we are unable to ascertain the real nature of ancient music: but it is evident that it was an art with which mankind was extremely delighted; for not only the poets, but the historians and philosophers, of the best ages of Greece and Rome, are as diffuse in its praises, as of those arts concerning which sufficient remains have descended to evince the truth of their panegyrics."

"Nothing, as you very justly observe, is now left us but conjecture," said the vicar; "and yet it is impossible to read the accounts of the extraordinary effects produced by the different '*modes*' of ancient music, without entertaining a strong conviction of its superiority over that of modern times. What have we, my dear Miss Villers, to compare with the soft '*Lydian*,' the grave '*Dorian*,' or the furious '*Phrygian*;' to say nothing of the subaltern modes of Aristides Quintilianus, and others; such, for example, as the '*erotic*,' '*comic*,' and '*encomiastic*?' What modern strains can produce the effects which are recorded to have follewod the performance of Timotheus, the director of the music of Alexander the Great? One day, while the prince was at table, the musician performed an air in the Phrygian mode, which made such an impression on him, that, being already heated with wine, he flew to his arms, and was going to attack his guests, had not Timotheus immediately changed the style of his performance to the sub-Phrygian, or Lydian. Music," continued the vicar, "has, in modern times, so fallen from this degree of majesty and power, as to induce some persons to doubt the truth of the historical statements."

"I confess, Mr Twaddleton," said Miss Villers, "that I have always been inclined to regard ancient music as the vehicle of poetry; and in a great degree to attribute to the power of the latter that influence which you appear to refer exclusively to the former."

"I am willing to admit," replied the vicar, "that, in the ancient theatre, poetry always accompanied her sister science, assisting, animating, and supporting her; in short, that she was, in all respects, her friend and fellow-labourer, '*qualem decet esse sororem*,' as the poet has it: but does not this rather prove that poetry, in itself, was insufficient to produce its full effects without the aid of music? In further proof of the power of ancient music, permit me to remind you that Plato has said, 'No change can be made in music without affecting the constitution of the state;' and Aristotle, who seems to have written his Politics only to oppose the sentiments of Plato, nevertheless agrees with him concerning the power which music has over mortals; and has not the judicious Polybius told us that music was necessary to soften the manners of the Arcadians? In short, madam, music has lost its power over the passions of mankind, and this can only have happened in consequence of its having degenerated from its ancient purity and grandeur. If any one should have the hardihood to deny this my position, let him attend a modern rout in

London. I have seen, my dear Miss Villers, a party at a whist-table, a dozen persons in *tête-à-tête*, and as many solitary individuals, sitting like automatons, not one of them being moved by the concord of sweet sounds with which some lady has been endeavouring to delight them."*

"That is exactly as it should be," interposed Mr Seymour; "whist† and music have nothing in common, but are really antagonistic."

"I admit it," said the vicar. "Silence, by a generally-acknowledged convention, is to wait on whist; and yet, methinks, had Timotheus appeared amongst them! hey, Miss Villers? I think I see the party at the whist-table, as his lyre suddenly changed from the Lydian to the Phrygian mode. I must, however, in candour state, that I once did actually see a lady lay down her cards in an apparent state of ecstasy, as a chorus of Handel suddenly burst upon her ear, in spite of a handful of trumps."

"And what might that chorus have been?" said Mr Seymour; "'*Bless'd be the hand?*' But, joking apart, you appear to have satisfied your mind upon a point which all the learning of Europe has left in a state of doubt and perplexity."

"I have merely delivered an opinion, Sir; you, perhaps, will favour us with your judgment."

"The subject under discussion, my good Sir, is one upon which no person can ever deliver a judgment, for this plain reason, that it is not possible for us to *hear* both sides."

"Psha! will you never cease to sully the pure stream of inquiry with verbal quibbles?"

"Well, then, to be serious; I agree with Miss Villers, that ancient music, whatever might have been its powers, was greatly indebted to the poetry which accompanied it for its influence over the feelings of mankind. It could not have been otherwise. The ancient instruments, as represented in sculpture, appear so simple as to be apparently incapable of producing great effects: and, indeed, amongst the writings of Aristoxenus, the oldest musical author, we cannot discover a trace of melody or harmony, such as we understand by *air* accompanied with different parts."

"To that very simplicity, Sir, am I disposed to refer the charm of ancient music," said the vicar; "it was addressed to the *ear*, Sir, whereas modern music is addressed to the *eye;* dexterity of execution is, now-a-days, more valued than beauty of composition; the sweetest shepherd that ever piped on his Doric reed would be less applauded than he who can make his pipe squeak for the space of five minutes without respiration. The ancients knew better than to suffer the energy and accentuation of their rhythm to be so destroyed; and only mark, Sir, the extreme jealousy with which they regarded every attempt to injure this simplicity;—it even became a subject of legislation; and Timotheus was actually banished from Sparta for having increased the number of the strings in his lyre."

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* It is said of Corelli that he was once playing one of his finest sonatas, but unfortunately the company talked to one another, whereupon Corelli softly placed his violin upon the table, and apologized for having interrupted the conversation.

† WHIST! an interjection commanding silence; a name suggestive of a very important, and even imperative condition of the game; whence, we presume, its name. As we are upon the subject of etymology, we may observe that TRUMP is an abbreviation of TRIUMPH.

"And now, my dear vicar, have you done? Have you said all you think necessary in defence of ancient music? If so, hear me, as the advocate of modern harmony. In the first place, there is not an anecdote which can be adduced in support of your side of the question that may not be met with one parallel, and equally strong, in defence of mine. You cite the authority of Plato, to show that the constitution of a state may be affected by changing its national music. What said the great Lord Chatham?—'*Give me the making of the national ballads, and I care not who makes the laws;*' and the effects produced on the English people by Dibdin's songs fully justified the maxim: and it has been said, and I believe truly, that Monk Lewis's nautical ballads produced a degree of enthusiasm that did more towards manning the British fleet with gallant tars than all the despotic exertions of the pressgang; but remember, Mr Twaddleton, it was not the *music*, but the *poetry* of those songs, which kindled the patriotic feelings which saved our country; and I apprehend that this has been the case in all ages, where the power of music has been said to excite the feelings of the populace. We know that the ancient bards of our own country called forth the emotions of their hearers by the *poetry* entoned to their harps; and with what success they practised their calling we may imagine, from the fact that Edward I., in his conquest of Wales, had recourse to the barbarous expedient of murdering all the bards, from the many obstacles they threw in his way by the strong hold which they had over the minds of the people. You have told us a story of Timotheus, and the influence of his harp over a drunken monarch. If this is adduced in proof of the power of ancient music, you must, at least, admit that modern times have also had a Timotheus, who could excite or calm, at his pleasure, the most impetuous emotions. Henry III., king of France, says *Le Journal de Sancy*, having given a concert on occasion of the marriage of the Duke de Joyeuse, Claudin le Jeune, a celebrated musician of that period, executed certain airs, which had such an effect on a young nobleman, that he drew his sword, and challenged every one near him to combat; but Claudin, equally prudent as Timotheus, instantly changed to an air which appeased the furious youth. But what shall we say of Stradella, the celebrated composer, whose music made the daggers drop from the hands of his assassins? Stradella was beset by three desperadoes, who had been hired to assassinate him; but, fortunately, they had an ear sensible to harmony. While waiting for a favourable opportunity to execute their purpose, they entered the church of St John de Lateran, during the performance of an oratorio, composed by the person whom they intended to destroy, and were so affected by the music, that they abandoned their design, and even waited on the musician to apprise him of his danger. Stradella, however, was not always so fortunate; other assassins, who, apparently, had no ear for music, stabbed him, some time afterwards, at Genoa."

"And thus afforded a practical illustration of that beautiful passage in Shakspeare," observed Miss Villers:—

"'The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.'"

"Are you satisfied?" asked Mr Seymour; "if not, I will proceed to tell you how Palma, a Neapolitan, induced a creditor who came to arrest him, not only to remit his debt, but to contribute a sum for his support."

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed the vicar; "I see your object is to exalt modern, at the expense of ancient music."

"In that you wrong me. I certainly do not believe that the ancients were better skilled than ourselves in music; and I have been anxious to convince you that there are as many modern as ancient stories in proof of the influence of harmony over our feelings; but no one will deny that music is capable of producing extraordinary effects. Let us only interrogate ourselves, and examine what have been our sensations on hearing a majestic or warlike piece of music, or a tender and pathetic air, sung or played with expression. Who does not feel that the latter tends as much to melt the soul and dispose it to pleasure, as the former to animate and exalt it? There is a celebrated air in Switzerland, which, I have no doubt, Miss Villers will presently play to us, called '*Ranz des Vaches*,' and which had such an extraordinary effect on the Swiss troops in the French service, that they always fell into a deep melancholy whenever they heard it. Louis XIV., therefore, forbade it ever to be played in France under the pain of a severe penalty. We are also told of a Scotch air, '*Lochaber no More*,' which had a similar effect on the natives of Scotland. Never shall I forget the effect produced upon myself by the impressive requiem of Jomelli, as performed at the chapel of the Portuguese embassy to the memory of the late King of Portugal. The movement with which it commenced was a deep and hollow murmur, that seemed to swell from the tomb, and with which the voices of spirits imperceptibly rose and intermingled;—a brilliant movement interposed,—it was a ray of hope that pierced the gloom of the sepulchre!"

"I think," said Miss Villers, "that I can exactly appreciate the nature and extent of Mr Seymour's opinion upon the question at issue. He does not deny the charm which the simple music of the ancients must have exercised over the hearer, although he attributes much of the effect to the poetry, of which it may certainly be said to have been the vehicle; and remember, that it is not easy to dissever the associations existing between certain airs and their accompanying poetry; therein, I suspect, we are to look for the solution of our problem. According to Homer, the fascinating strains even of the Sirens were not solely indebted to music for their powers; their songs were the repositories of historical knowledge." *

"Very likely," said the vicar; "but I still agree with Jacob Bryant, that nothing can show more fully the power of ancient harmony than the character given of the Sirens; their cruelty the ancients held in detestation, and yet they always speak feelingly of their music."

"At all events," said Miss Villers, in a tone of conciliation, "I do most perfectly agree with you in believing that the intricate combinations of modern harmony, by exciting our astonishment at the execution of the artist, very frequently overcome the influence of the music upon our passions."

"I thank you for that concession," said the vicar.

Miss Villers then proposed to demonstrate the forcible and expressive language of modern music by an experiment. "Allow me to inquire," said she, "whether any of the party are acquainted with a game which has been justly entitled to the appellation of THE MAGIC OF MUSIC?"

"Never," replied the vicar; "nor can I imagine either the nature or objects of such a game."

"Its object is to display the power of music as an expressive language: the manner in which I propose to exemplify it, I will, with your permission, explain in a few words. The musical performer shall place herself at the harp, or pianoforte, surrounded by the party who are desirous of witnessing the pastime; the person to be operated upon must retire from the apartment, until the service which, under the direction of the music, it is determined he shall perform, is duly agreed upon and arranged. Such person is then to be readmitted;

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* "Oh, stay, and listen to us; we'll unfold
All that time treasures, and the *world contains*.
So sung the alluring Sirens, pouring forth
A most melodious strain."
—*Odyss.*

not a word, look, or gesture is to escape from any one present; by the expression of the music alone is he to receive his instructions, and, unless I am much deceived, you will find that this is amply sufficient for the purpose."

"My dear madam, the thing is utterly impossible," exclaimed the vicar: "it cannot be done; unless, indeed, you really possess the secret of the ancient '*modes*,' which were not even known to Meibomius, the learned commentator upon the Greek musician Alypius: nay, Isaac Vossius himself, the expounder of rhythm, were he now alive, would never credit it."

"Are you willing to make the experiment?" said Miss Villers? "if so, be so kind as to leave the room for a few minutes."

The vicar accordingly prepared to depart, casting at the same time, upon his fair companion, a look which sufficiently expressed the scepticism he felt upon the occasion.

"But you have not told me," said he, "by what signal I am to return, and submit to the proposed ordeal."

"The music will inform you, if you pay sufficient attention to its language," replied Miss Villers.

The door having been carefully closed, the company were consulted in a whisper, as to the service they should require the vicar to perform. "I should propose," said Miss Villers, "that Mr Twaddleton be directed to take a rose out of the basket of flowers on the chimney-piece, and, having smelt it, to carry it to the harp."

"And do you propose to express all these different movements by the aid of music? If you succeed, there must be an end to the vicar's scepticism," observed Mr Seymour.

"If I fail upon this occasion, it will be the first time," said Miss Villers: "but you must all promise to be silent, and to maintain the most absolute command over your countenances."

Miss Villers seated herself at the pianoforte, and played off an elegant and sparkling overture, which so delighted Mrs Seymour, that she involuntarily exclaimed, "If music can be made to speak an intelligible language, it must be under the guidance of Miss Villers."

"Hush!" cried the performer, in a half-whisper; "I am now about to summon the vicar into the room, and we must be as silent as Carthusians."

She accordingly, with exquisite taste and address, introduced the air of "*Open the door, Lord Gregory*," into which she infused so much expression, that the vicar must have been as dull as Midas had he not instantly caught its meaning. Nor were the lady's hopes disappointed. Mr Twaddleton entered, and appeared as if anxious to address the performer; but an intelligible glance from Mr Seymour recalled him to his duty, and hermetically sealed his lips. His intention had been, doubtless, to inquire whether his appearance were seasonable; but the question was anticipated by Miss Villers, who immediately on his entrance struck up the air of "*See, the conquering hero comes!*" which at once satisfied his doubts, and conveyed, in language not to be misunderstood, the sanction of the enchantress, to whose spells he had so unreservedly intrusted himself.

The vicar had been told that he was to perform certain acts on his readmission into the room; but, thought he, how am I to discover the thread which is to guide me through so perplexing a maze? I can discover at this moment nothing but a concord of sweet sounds, that would rather dispose me to listen in profound repose, than to enter upon any service of exertion. Miss Villers saw and guessed the nature of his embarrassment, and, changing the melody, struck into the air of "*Hearken, and I will tell thee how.*" She then, by a succession of well-selected chords, which were now played "*piano,*" now "*forte,*" and by what, in musical language, are called *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, convinced the vicar that she commanded an instrument fully capable of readily and forcibly expressing encouragement and repulse in all its degrees.

"Thus much then is certain," mentally ejaculated the vicar, "that she is enabled, by the aid of music, to signify her approbation, or disapprobation, of any act which I may attempt to perform. I accordingly predicate of this said music, that it is, *bonâ fide*, a logical weapon; inasmuch as it can affirm and deny. It, therefore, only remains for me, knowing as I do that I have some act to perform, to ascertain the '*locus*,' or '*ubi*;' for the act in question, whatever it may be, must of necessity be done or accomplished '*in proprio loco*,' or in some definite part of the room." With this determination, founded, as he believed it to be, on the unerring basis of Aristotelian logic, he advanced towards the table; but the loud and discordant sounds of the instrument at once convinced him, that, however correct his notions might be with reference to the "*substance,*" or first "*predicament,*" they were evidently erroneous as to the "*accidents*" of "time," "place," and "relation;" at least, such were the ideas that floated through the categorical organ of his cranium, and he accordingly faced about, and made a retreat towards the window; but the notes now became still more clamorous, and increased in vehemence. "Ay, ay," thought he, "it is quite evident that I am receding from the theatre of action;" and with this conviction he diverted his steps into a different direction, and, in a slow pace, tracked the path by his ear, with as much sagacity as a dog follows his prey by his nose. As he approached the fireplace, the storm of sounds gradually subsided, until a peaceful murmur breathed around, which finally died away as the vicar placed his hand upon the chimney-piece. "So then it appears, after all, that I have some service to perform at the fireside. It is, doubtless, to sit down," thought he, as he espied the elbow-chair, which, at that moment, appeared to his fancy as if stretching forth its hospitable arms to receive him; but scarcely had he accepted the imaginary invitation of his old friend to its luxurious lap of down, than a sudden *sforzato*, or crash in the minor key, made him rebound upon his legs, as nimbly as though the cushion had been a bed of thorns. Miss Villers now resolved the discord, and dexterously dashed into an allegro movement, in which she introduced the air of "*How sweet are the flowers that grow!*"

The vicar's face mantled with a smile, as the bouquet on the chimney-piece met his eye, and harmonised with the sounds that floated in his ear. "It is evident," thought he, "that those flowers are the objects of my pursuit,"—but what was he to do with them? The musician solved the question, by tastefully exchanging the former air for that of "*Ask if yon damask rose be sweet.*" No sooner had these notes delivered their melodious errand to the subtle ear of the vicar, than he instantly seized the rose, and carried it in triumph to his olfactory organs; at the same moment the music ceased. The pause, however, was but of short duration; for Miss Villers, by resuming her labours, intimated that some farther service was expected. Was he to return the rose? Certainly not; for the attempt was marked by strong disapprobation. Was he to take it out of the room? The music put a decided negative upon that movement; for the vicar had scarcely measured half the distance of the apartment before the air of "*Fly not yet*" arrested his steps. By a continuation of the same varying style of expression and strongly-marked rhythm, the vicar was shortly led to affix the rose upon the harp.

"Upon my word," exclaimed the vicar, "I shall no longer hesitate to credit the story related in 'Peter Simple,' of a certain lady who played so exquisitely, that, upon introducing an imitation of thunder, the cream for tea became sour, besides three casks of beer in the cellar!"

"Why, papa!" exclaimed Louisa, "Miss Villers reminds me of the 'Elfin Damsel,' in the Danish fairy legends, who, when she struck the second chord of her golden harp, compelled the company to do whatever she wished."

In closing our account of this interesting scene, it is scarcely necessary to describe the delight and mirth of the juvenile party. It was, in truth, a very extraordinary exhibition; and when the reader considers that, beyond what was furnished by the expressive language of music, the vicar did not receive a single hint for his guidance, he may, perhaps, cherish some scepticism upon the subject; but we can assure him that we have repeatedly witnessed, not only a similar, but a still more complicated performance of the same kind, and with equal success. (50.)

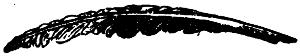
The evening of the day on which this musical divertisement was performed was one of those which so frequently occur in August, when sultry heat is succeeded by refreshing coolness. Isabella Villers possessed a quick sensibility to the beauties of nature, and she quitted the drawing-room to enjoy, without interruption, that pensive quiet which maintained an undisputed dominion. The moon had but just risen, tipping the summits of the wood with silver, while it left the mass of foliage in deeper shadow. Never was there a fairy scene better calculated to awaken the emotions of the heart, or to kindle the energies of the imagination. It was a spot in which Oberon and Titania might well have dwelt. The hour, too, was propitious to the indulgence of that undefined species of reverie which is the refinement of intellectual pleasure. Having traversed the winding path of the wood for some distance, she found herself in one of those sequestered glades we have formerly described. She seated herself on a rustic bench, tastefully formed out of an aged oak, whose venerable figure was bending under the hand of time, and her mind was gratefully lulled into a pensive calm by the review of past events, as the ear is soothed by the murmur of wild and distant music. A sudden breath of wind, as it swept the foliage, aroused her from her reverie, and turned the current of her ideas from past scenes to future prospects. The moon, as if in sympathy, suddenly peered through the sylvan avenue, and threw her tender light upon one of those statues which we have already described as giving such an air of classic sanctity to these secluded glades. It was the figure of TIME, which in the gloom of the wood had hitherto escaped her observation. To a mind of exuberant fancy, a leaf cannot fall to the ground, nor a zephyr waft the fragrance of the violet on its dewy pinions, without conveying some beautiful emblem of mortality. Isabella rose from her seat, and approached the figure, whose hoary countenance appeared as if lighted up into a placid smile by the beams of the moon, which fell directly upon it; her eye glanced from his face to his scythe; its blade was hidden in a cluster of roses, while a bright evergreen played around his hourglass—"Were I susceptible of a superstitious impression," thought Isabella, "did ever an occasion present itself better calculated to justify its indulgence?" On the pedestal of the figure was a basso-relievo, in which Time appeared in the act of shivering into pieces the club of Hercules with a crutch. In a few minutes she quitted the scene, which, in spite of her better reason, she could not wholly divest of its prophetic influence, and proceeding along the winding path, at length descended into the valley. The moon was at this time shrouded in dark clouds; and although, by a painful effort, Isabella Villers summoned all the powers of her vision, the objects around her remained invisible, until the eye had so far accommodated itself to the gloom, as to recognise the white foam of the waterfall. The moon now gave a coy and furtive glance, the water for an instant sparkled in her beams, and then was lost in deeper shadow. A spectre of human form, but of gigantic stature, arose from the spot to which the eyes of Isabella had been directed. Was it the spirit of the Fountain? It appeared to advance, but, the moon once again shining forth in splendour, it vanished;

> . . . . "and what seem'd corporal melted
> As breath into the wind."

The courage of Isabella was destined to sustain another trial, for scarcely had the vision disappeared when she distinctly heard her own name pronounced; and since, from the direction of the sound, she well knew that the spot from whence it issued was inaccessible, we ought not to feel surprised at her having at the instant referred it to a supernatural origin—it was, however, but the illusion of the moment, and she determined to return to the house and submit the events of the evening to the judgment of Mr Seymour.

We shall not trespass any longer upon the patience of the reader, than to assure him that Miss Villers, having arrived in safety at the Lodge, very shortly afterwards retired to rest. With your permission, gentle reader, we will follow her example; for, to say the truth, our lamp—that midnight sun which illumines the path of the author—is dimmed by the dark clouds that lower at its setting; our Pegasus, the pen, which has raced for so many hours over the snowy plains of foolscap, is fairly "done up," and refuses any longer to sip of that spring which can alone sustain its powers, and impart utility to its movements.

Ecce!



"And these were not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies."
—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

CHAPTER XIX.

On entering the library on the following morning, Mr Seymour informed Miss Villers that Major Snapwell had taken his departure in order to breakfast with the vicar, and that he had invited Tom and Louisa to accompany him, for the sake of inspecting the cabinet of medals; but he added, that he expected the return of the party at two o'clock, when he proposed to give them a lecture upon the philosophy of the several toys which are indebted for their action to atmospheric vibrations.

"Suppose, then," said Miss Villers, "that we walk towards Forest Lane, and meet them on their return. This arrangement," she added, "will afford me an opportunity of communicating to you the history of some adventures I encountered last evening, and of taking your opinion upon them."

"You well know," answered Mr Seymour, "that you may always command my services. But you have really raised my curiosity: what can be the nature of the adventures you speak of?"

Miss Villers then entered into a particular account of all she saw and heard the preceding evening; with which the reader is already acquainted. Mr Seymour, however, suggested the propriety of abstaining from any discussion upon the subject until the children were present to hear it; for, said he, "I am most desirous that they should be familiarized with those natural sources of illusion which enlighten the wise, while they minister to the superstitious fears of the ignorant."

They had not reached the entrance of Forest Lane, before they perceived the vicar with Tom and Louisa, followed by the major.

"Well," exclaimed Tom, as he ran to meet his father, "we have had a most delightful morning; amongst other things, do you know we have found out the meaning of the crescent, which the Turks always wear and use as their ensign?"

"Indeed! then, let me hear your explanation," said his father.

Major Snapwell and the vicar had by this time joined the party, and with their assistance, Tom was enabled to offer the following account of it. The crescent appears on the early coins of Byzantium, and was intended to commemorate the defeat of Philip of Macedon, who, as he was about to storm it on a cloudy night, was discovered by the sudden light of the moon. When the Turks entered Constantinople, they found this ancient badge in various parts of the city, and, suspecting that it might possess some magical power, they assumed the symbol and its power to themselves; so that the crescent became, and still continues to be, the chief Turkish ensign.

"Well, I must own that you have given me a new and very curious piece of historical information, and I thank you for it," said Mr Seymour.

"Medals, then, are occasionally of some little use," remarked the vicar, with a sarcastic smile; for, if the truth must be told, the reverend antiquary had been a little nettled as usual by the freedom with which Major Snapwell had criticised some of his rarities; but let that pass.

As soon as the party reassembled after the excursion of the morning, the circumstances which so greatly astonished Miss Villers on the preceding evening were again related by her.

"My dear young lady," observed Mr Seymour, "I never heard a better story for illustrating the illusions to which the senses are exposed; and if you will read the second letter on 'Natural Magic,' by Sir David Brewster, you will obtain a ready explanation of your vision: but let us examine it philosophically. In the first place, you acknowledge that your imagination had been previously excited during your ramble through the wood, and more especially by your reverie at the statue of Time; now it is well known that such a condition of the mind prepares and adapts the organs of vision for those illusions which I am about to explain. You have told us that, on your descent into the valley, the moon had withdrawn its light, and several minutes had elapsed before an object became visible, and that was the *white* foam of the waterfall."

"If I rightly remember, Brewster has stated that the spectres that are conjured up by the imagination are always *white*, because no colour can be seen at night," observed Mrs Seymour.

"Undoubtedly," replied her husband; "and as these spectres are formed out of objects whose different parts reflect different degrees of light, their fainter parts will appear and disappear with the ever-varying degree of illumination which is occasioned by the moon shining through a veil of clouds, and a change even of shape will be thus produced which will impart to the object in question the semblance of a living form. The actual state of the eye itself will also greatly assist in completing such an illusion; for, in consequence of the small degree of light, the pupil expands to nearly the whole width of the iris, in order to collect every ray, and in such a condition it cannot accommodate itself to see near objects distinctly; so that the form of a body actually becomes more shadowy and confused when it comes within the very distance at which we count upon obtaining the best view of it."

"You have certainly explained the reason why bodies seen under a faint illumination may appear distorted and caricatured; indeed, I now remember that Sir Walter Scott, in his 'Pirate,' has given us a very good illustration: for Cleveland, when abandoned on Coffin-bay, is said to have seen many a dim and undefined spectre in the misty dawn. But I am still at a loss to understand how the vision I witnessed in the valley could have been conjured up," said Miss Villers.

"It was the doubtful and flickering light of the clouded moon upon the mass of white sandstone, or, in the words of Milton, that of 'a sable cloud that turned forth her silver lining on the night,'" said Mr Seymour. "It is a great law of the imagination, that *a likeness in part tends to become a likeness of the whole.* The sandstone presented, in the first instance, a form somewhat resembling the human figure, or some part of it, when your active imagination immediately completed the outline; just in the same way as we trace images in the fire, or castles in the clouds, or grotesque figures of men and animals on damp walls." (51.)

Major Snapwell, who expressed himself much pleased with the conversation, desired to call the attention of his friends to an adventure related in the delightful German romance of 'UNDINE,' which, he said, would confirm all he had heard upon the subject. It was as follows:—

"A worthy and pious old fisherman, residing on the borders of a lake, at the foot of a deep forest, through which he had repeatedly passed without interruption, heard, on a certain evening, the very unusual trampling of a mounted steed drawing nearer and nearer, as it appeared to be emerging from the darkness of the wood. The fisherman became alarmed; and what he had fancied in many a stormy night respecting the mysteries of the forest flashed through his mind in a moment. Being thus prepared for any illusion of the senses, he raised his eyes towards the wood, and saw '*the figure of a man of gigantic stature, and snow-white appearance, nodding his head in a portentous manner:*' when an interval of reflection and a short prayer so tranquillised his disturbed nerves, that he readily perceived the strange mistake into which his heated imagination had betrayed him; and so affected was he, to use his own words, that he could 'with difficulty refrain from laughing.' The white, nodding figure he had seen became transformed, in the twinkling of an eye, to what in reality it was, a small brook, long and familiarly known to him, which ran foaming from the forest, and discharged itself into the lake."

Mrs Seymour observed that in Goethe's ballad of the "ERL KING," a similar illusion is described—"of which," said she, "I only remember one stanza, but that will be sufficient for the occasion:—

> 'My father! my father! and saw'st thou not
> The Erl King's daughter, near yon dark spot?'
> 'My son, my son, I see well the gleam,
> 'Tis the old green willow beside the stream.'"

Miss Villers expressed her satisfaction at being thus convinced that all she had seen at the waterfall in the valley was but "a phantasy that had played upon her eyesight;" and having thus disposed of this part of my tale, "I doubt not," she added, "but that you will, with equal truth and satisfaction, explain the circumstance of my name having been so audibly pronounced, and from a spot which made it impossible that it should have come from any human being."

"It was the solitary spirit of the dell," said Mr Seymour, with a smile: "a rural spirit who is disposed to become very loquacious whenever the repose of her habitation is disturbed. I can assure you," added he, "that you are not the first person whom her gambols have surprised and terrified in the shades of evening. I presume you have discovered that I allude to that unseen musician of the air—ECHO."

"Indeed, Mr Seymour, the sound could not have been the effect of an echo, for I never spoke," replied Miss Villers.

"Very likely; but I happen to know that Mrs Seymour called you by name at the orchard gate."

"Nor will that explain it," observed Miss Villers; "for in that case I must certainly have heard her; whereas the sound came in a very different direction, from the inaccessible rocks of sandstone."

"Young lady," said Mr Seymour, "you must forgive me for telling you that your philosophy is at fault. It is as possible to hear an echo without recognising the direct sound which produced it, as it is for two persons to be so placed as to see each other in a looking-glass, although objects might obstruct the direct view of themselves.* Did you never walk between an irregular wall and a row of houses, or along a valley intercepted by houses, during the ringing of a peal of bells? Nothing is more common, under such circumstances, than for the sound, instead of arriving at the ear in its true direction, to be reflected in one that is opposite to it. Now, before we quit the subject of optical illusion, let me relate an incident which occurred to myself. I presume you are all acquainted with the appearance in the grass, called a '*Fairy ring?*'"

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* See page 234.

"To be sure," said Tom, "a very dark circle of grass, around which there is generally a ring that looks as if the ground had been burnt."

"Very well; and we are now satisfied that this appearance is the consequence of the growth and decay of certain fungi, (52,) although the common people still believe that the ring is produced by the gambols of fairies. Now, then, for my story. It was on a moonlight night, last August, when strolling along a neighbouring meadow, enjoying the beauties of the evening, that I met a young farmer, an intelligent person, although a little inclined to a belief in the marvellous, who, on approaching with a hasty step, thus accosted me:—'You have often ridiculed my belief in fairies, and of their being the cause of those rings which go by their name; you may now, if you please, satisfy yourself of their reality, if you will only return with me to the elm-close, which, as you know, abounds with fairy rings. Within the last few minutes I have actually seen them at their gambols under the great elm; they are, Sir, tiny beings, which, as far as I could judge at a distance, cannot be more than a few inches in height; but there they are, frisking away most merrily to tinkling music. Pray, Sir, do let us return, and satisfy yourself as well as me.' You may readily suppose that I lost no time in complying with my friend's request; and, sure enough, there they were."

"What, the fairies!" exclaimed Louisa, in astonishment.

"Have patience, my dear, and you shall hear. I confess," continued Mr Seymour, "that, at the first glance, I was almost startled into a belief in the reality of my friend's assertion; but, on approaching, the Fairy Queen and her court were changed into a circle of fungi, to which the shadowy play of the leaves of the neighbouring tree had, in the light of the moon, given the appearance of a fantastic motion, while their waving and rustling sounds mimicked wild music. The illusion, I will admit, was well calculated to impose upon the credulous countryman."

"So then," exclaimed the vicar, whimsically quoting the words of Falstaff, "'these were not fairies! I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies.'"*

"Well," said Louisa, "I suppose your young farmer was now satisfied."

"Not at all," answered her father, "he still maintained that he had seen the fairies, observing that it was a common trick with them, when watched, to turn themselves all at once into flowers, such as lilies, tulips, and the like."

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* Merry Wives of Windsor.

"Or to take shelter in the purple bell of the *foxglove*,"* suggested the major.

The young party were much amused by this anecdote, and the vicar took the opportunity to explain, on natural principles, several superstitious appearances recorded in ancient legends.

Mr Seymour now proposed to dedicate an hour to the explanation of the several toys which owe their action to atmospheric vibration; "I shall then," said he, addressing Miss Villers, "be at your service to interrogate the spirit of the valley; and the children, whom I intend to accompany us, will be thus better prepared to comprehend the theory of the echo.

"Musical instruments, amongst which I include the toys to which I have alluded, may be classed under three heads:—*stringed* instruments, such as the harp, violin, &c.; *wind* instruments, as the flute and trumpet; and instruments of *percussion*, as the tabor and drum."

"And which kind do you consider the most ancient?" asked Miss Villers.

"*Wind* instruments, madam, most unquestionably," cried Mr Twaddleton. "Diodorus ascribed their invention to the accidental notice of the whistling of the wind in the reeds on the banks of the Nile; and the poet Lucretius maintained a similar opinion."

"I really, my dear Sir, cannot see any good reason for giving this preference, in point of antiquity, to wind instruments," said Mr Seymour. "The lyre, or harp, is, surely, as ancient as any instrument on record. The mythologist ascribes the idea of producing sound by the vibration of a string to Apollo; which is said by Censorinus to have suggested itself to him, on his hearing the twang of the bow of his sister Diana. With respect to instruments of percussion, it may be reasonably supposed that the sonorous ringing of hollow bodies, when struck, must have very soon suggested their invention to mankind; but I really consider any research into a question of such obscurity as uninteresting as it must be hopeless; let us rather devote our attention to the philosophy of these instruments. I have stated that they may be referred to three principal classes; but I must at the same time observe that, in some cases, the vibrations of solid bodies are made to co-operate with those of a given portion of air; for example, trumpets and various horns may be said to be mixed wind instruments, since their sound is produced by the joint vibrations of the air and a solid body: and in certain stringed instruments, as in the violin, the immediate effect of the strings is increased by means of a sounding-board, which appears to be agitated by their motion, and to act more powerfully on the air than the strings could have done alone."

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* In Welsh this flower is called by the beautiful name of Maneg-ellyllon, or the Fairies-glove; now, in the days of our ancestors, these elves were called in English '*The good folks*.' No doubt, then, these flowers were called the good folks' glove, a name since shortened into *Fox-glove*.—*Talbot's Etym.*

"I apprehend that this mixture must obtain more or less in all instruments," said the vicar.

"Not at all. The flute, flageolet, humming-top, and the cavity of the mouth in whistling, may be considered as simple wind instruments, in which the quality of the sound is alone determined by the vibrations of the air. I have already explained the manner in which the oscillations of a string excite aërial undulations, and thus produce sound; and you have seen that the nature of these sounds is determined by the length and thickness of such strings: the theory equally applies to wind instruments, in which case a column of air corresponds with the string, the volume and length of which determine the sound. In the harp, the strings are constructed of different lengths and dimensions; and so, in the *Syrinx*, or *Pan's pipes*, is the volume of air adjusted to the respective notes by the size and length of the reeds; but, in the violin, the lengths of the strings are altered at pleasure by pressing them down on the finger-board; and, in like manner, the effective length of the flute is changed by the opening or shutting the holes made at proper distances in them; the opening of a hole at any part being the same in effect as if the pipe were cut off a little beyond it."

Mr Seymour and the vicar then entered into a long discussion, with which it is not our intention to swell our history, or to exhaust the patience of the reader; we shall, however, with his permission, collect from the mass some of the more interesting facts, and present them in as condensed a form as may be consistent with perspicuity. In speaking of the *Jew's harp*, a little instrument with which every schoolboy is well acquainted, the vicar stated that its origin was lost in the long lapse of time; but that it was in very common use throughout Europe, and more especially in the Netherlands and the Tyrol, where it was the delight of the peasants and their families. He also said that it was known in Asia, and that the Greeks of Smyrna called it, in imitation of its sound, *biambo*.* The name by which it is now known, he observed, was evidently derived from the Jews, who were formerly the great vendors of it, and of other toys, throughout Europe, although he stated that his friend Mr Prybabel was of opinion that it was a corruption of *jaw's* harp. Mr Seymour described its construction, and the theory of its action. It is composed of two parts, the *body* and the *tongue:* the former has some resemblance to the handle of a certain kind of cork-screw; the latter consists of a little strip of steel, joined to the upper part of the body, and bent at its extremity, so that the fingers may touch it more readily. This tongue, or elastic plate, produces, in itself, only a sound which serves as a drone, although it appears to act like the motion of the bow of a violin in exciting other sounds, by breaking the current of air from the mouth, the acuteness or gravity of which will be determined by the pressure of the lips, and the magnitude of the cavity of the mouth. To understand, however, this part of its operation, it is necessary that the reader should become acquainted with the nature and effects of what have been termed *Resonances, and Reciprocated Vibrations of Columns of Air.* This property of sounding bodies, which to the ignorant must appear as an inexplicable species of sympathy, will be more fully explained in a note (53); at present we shall merely give one or two examples of its effects. A singer has been known to break into pieces a large tumbler-glass by the power of his voice; and a violin suspended against a wall may be heard to yield the same notes as those produced by a performer on a similar instrument in the same room. To produce such an effect, however, one condition is indispensable, that the body to be put in vibration must be in unison, or agreeing in pitch, with the one communicating the sound. Hence the necessity of so adapting the capacity of the mouth, in playing the Jew's harp, as to make the column of air which it contains to reciprocate the sound of its tongue. The subject was agreeably concluded by some anecdotes which were related by Miss Villers, in proof of the astonishing powers of this little instrument when directed by the skill of a master. For the sake of those who may be curious upon this subject we have introduced an account of two great performers, in an additional note (54). In speaking of the flute, Mr Twaddleton took occasion to observe, that its name was derived from *fluta,*[*] a lamprey, or small Sicilian eel, which has seven holes on each side; an etymology which will probably be as new to our readers as it was to ourselves. The children also received their share of instruction and amusement upon this occasion. Tom, for the first time, became acquainted with the use of the pea in the whistle, which, he was told, was to agitate and break the current of air, and thus to produce a succession of quick vibrations, upon which the acuteness of its sound depended. Louisa

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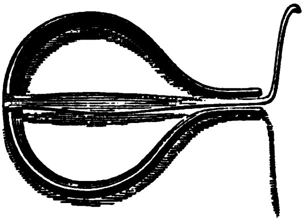
* In "*The Notes of a Tour among the Indian Tribes of Southern Chili*," by Edmund Ruel Smith, we are informed that the Jew's harp is as national with those barbarians, as the guitar is with the Spaniards, and that no young gallant is considered fully equipped to lay siege to a lady's heart, if unprovided with that instrument, dangling by a string of beads from his neck.



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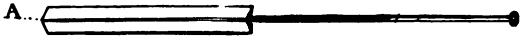
[*] "Murænæ optimæ flutæ sunt in Sicilia."—*Varr. R. R.* ii. 6. 2.

exhibited her *whizgig*,* which, for the information of the unlearned reader, we may state to consist of a hollow disc of wood, having an opening in its side, like that in the humming-top: by the alternate coiling and uncoiling of the cord upon which it is strung it receives a circular motion, the rapidity of which produces, by means of its opening, an aërial vibration that gives a loud ringing sound.

"I should very much like to hear your opinion of that Egyptian wonder, the statue of Memnon," said the vicar.

"Its history," answered Mr Seymour, "is involved in considerable doubt and difficulty. Authors of credit agree in stating that it certainly saluted the rising sun with a musical sound: but doubts are still entertained as to the cause which produced it, whether it was the effect of mechanism, or a juggle of the Egyptian priests. An English traveller, Sir A. Smith, informs us that he visited the statue, and actually heard the sounds at six o'clock in the morning; but he believes that they proceeded, not from the figure, but from the pedestal, and he considers that they may arise from the impulse of the air upon the stones of which it is constructed. Others have supposed that the heat of the sun's rays, concentrated by a mirror, may have acted upon plates of metal so as to produce the effect. It is not my intention to argue this point; but I will shew you an experiment, by which you will, I think, be convinced that a statue might easily be constructed like the Memnon to yield musical sounds by the application of heat, whether derived from the solar rays, or from any other source."

Mr Seymour produced a piece of apparatus, of which we here present the reader with a sketch. It consists of an oblong block of copper, one surface of which is flat, the other formed by two planes meeting at an obtuse angle, and having a groove at the point of junction A. To this block a handle is affixed.



Mr Seymour, having thus described the form of the instrument, and stated that its construction was solely directed with a view of making it oscillate freely on any plain surface, thrust the block into the fire, and, when sufficiently heated, placed it on its angular surface, upon a flat piece of lead. It immediately began to vibrate, producing, at first, a kind of singing noise, not unlike that of the simmering of a tea-kettle, but the vibrations became more and more rapid until a distinct musical sound was produced, which from time to time varied in its pitch, and gave rise to an effect scarcely inferior to that of the Eolian harp.

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* This toy, as well as the tops and kites, would appear, from Sir George Grey's "Polynesian Mythology," to have been recorded in the ancient legends of the savages.

"It is an interesting experiment," said Miss Villers.

"And how admirably does it illustrate the theory of musical sounds!" observed Mr Seymour. "We have here, you perceive, a series of impulses communicated to our ears by the air, at first in slow succession, and by degrees more and more rapidly; at first we hear a rattling noise, then a low murmur, and then a hum, which by degrees acquires the character of a musical note, rising higher and higher in acuteness. It is evident, therefore, from this experiment alone, by showing the correspondence which exists between the pitch of the note and the rapidity of the succession of the vibrations, that our sensation of the different pitches of musical notes originates in the different rapidities with which their impulses are communicated to our ears."

"Pray explain to us the manner in which the block of metal is thus made to vibrate," said Miss Villers.

"It depends," replied Mr Seymour, "upon the alternate contraction of the two opposite edges of the metal from the loss of heat: one of the edges coming in contact with the cold lead contracts, and, by destroying the balance of the block, causes its opposite edge to come into contact with the lead, and to undergo the same change; and it is by this alternate action that a rapid vibration is produced, occasioning, as you will now readily understand, the musical sounds you have just heard."*

Miss Villers here made some interesting remarks upon the sounds produced by flowing water. "In the fountain," she said, "musical tones are produced by vibrations occasioned by the drops on the jet, and reciprocated by the surface on which they fall."

The lecture having been concluded, Mrs Seymour proposed that the party should at once proceed to the valley, but the vicar suggested the propriety of first explaining to the children the principle upon which the echo depended.

Mr Seymour concurred in this opinion, and immediately afforded the following explanation:—"An echo is nothing more than a reflected sound. When the aërial vibrations strike against any obstacle of sufficient magnitude, they are reflected back to the ear, and produce a repetition of the sound, which will appear to proceed from the point whence they are reflected, so that the apparent direction of the voice becomes completely changed by an echo. A considerable extent of level wall will sometimes produce it in great perfection; for a smooth surface reflects sound much better than a rough one: but the circumstance which, perhaps, contributes more than any other to the perfection of an echo, is the form of the reflecting surface; a convex surface is a very bad reflector of sound, a flat one reflects very well, but a small degree of concavity is the form best adapted to the purpose."

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* This vibration has been ascribed also to the sudden expansion of the particles of lead in contact with the heated block and to their subsequent contraction; thus giving a blow to each side of the copper block alternately.—ED.

"I believe," observed the vicar, "that fluid bodies will also, under certain circumstances, so reflect sound as to produce echoes."

"Undoubtedly. The surface of water, especially at the bottom of a well, and sometimes even clouds, will produce this effect, as, during a tempest, the continued rolling of the thunder is nothing but the reverberation of a single discharge bandied about from cloud to cloud."

"Do you mean to say," asked Tom, "that sound is reflected from an obstacle to the ear, in the same manner as my ball is reflected after striking the wall?"

"Certainly; supposing, of course, that your ball is perfectly elastic; and in that case, you no doubt remember the direction it will follow."

"It will always make the angle of *reflection* equal to the angle of *incidence*,"* said Tom.

"Undoubtedly; and so it is with sound, since air, as you know, is perfectly elastic. If, therefore, the vibrations fall perpendicularly on the obstacle, they are reflected back in the same line; if obliquely, the sound returns obliquely in the opposite direction, the angle of reflection being equal to that of incidence. You will, therefore, readily perceive," continued Mr Seymour, addressing his conversation more particularly to Miss Villers, "that a person situated at an appropriate angle may hear an echo, as it is returned from the reflecting surface, without hearing the original sound which produced it. M. Genefay has described, as existing near Rouen, a curious oblique echo which is not heard by the person who emits the sound. A person who sings hears only his own voice, while those who listen hear only the echo."

"As a smooth and concave surface is capable of producing an echo, how does it happen that we so rarely meet with one in a room?" asked Louisa.

"Echoes, my dear, are, in fact, produced in every room, by the reverberation of sound from its walls; but on account of the velocity with which it travels, they are imperceptible in small chambers, because the sound occupies no sensible period of time in moving from the mouth to the walls, and in returning back to the ear again; consequently the original sound and its echo become so blended and incorporated, as to appear but one sound. As the dimensions of the apartment increase, the defect will increase with it; and, in buildings for music or public speaking, it is often highly inconvenient, and difficult of prevention.* Breaking the surface, or rendering it uneven by mouldings and ornaments, appears to be the most effectual method of curing the evil."

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* The reader is requested to turn to page 129; for all that is there said respecting the principle of *reflected* motion will apply to the theory of the echo.

"I perceive then, that in order to produce a perfect echo, the person who speaks must be at a considerable distance from the obstacle that reflects the sound," said Louisa.

"It cannot be otherwise," replied her father; "and if you will only consider the rate at which sound travels, you will readily understand the necessity of such an arrangement. In order to produce a distinct echo of one syllable, or of a single sound, the reflecting obstacle must be at least 70 feet from the sound, so that it may have to pass through a distance of 70 feet to get to the reflector, and 70 more to return to the ear, making a total passage of 140 feet, which it will accomplish in rather less than one-eighth of a second; a period of time so small, that, if it were diminished, it is evident the echo must be assimilated with the sound itself."

"But the echo in the valley," observed Mrs Seymour, "will repeat four or five syllables."

"Undoubtedly; if we make the experiment at a sufficient distance from the sandstone rocks which act as the reflector."

"It would appear, then, that the farther the reflecting object is off, the greater number of syllables will the echo repeat; and I should think that this fact might enable us to compute the distance of the reflector," said Mrs Seymour.

"In a moderate way of speaking, about three and a half syllables are pronounced in one second, or seven syllables in two seconds; when an echo, therefore, repeats seven syllables, we may infer that the reflecting object is 1142 feet distant."

"But, my dear Mr Seymour, this must surely depend upon the nature of the syllables," said the vicar. "Pray excuse the interruption; but you will admit that there must exist a great difference between the echo of dactyles and spondees. Suppose an echo should be able to return ten syllables; thus—'*Tityre, tu patulæ recubans*'—I will be bound for it, that if you were to try its powers in slow heavy spondees, as *monstrum horrendum*, a return of not more than four or five syllables could be observed."

"I will not dispute that point," said Mr Seymour; "or take, if you will, the famous passage in the Tenth Odyssey, where Sisyphus rolls the stone up the mountain in spondees, and allows it to run down in a torrent of dactyles."

Louisa here remarked that she had often heard of some very extraordinary echoes in different parts of the world, to which her father had not alluded; she mentioned, for instance, those which are said to repeat the same sound several times in succession.

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* This is very remarkable in the new mineralogical lecture-room in the public library at Cambridge.

"From the explanation which I have already given of the nature of echoes," said Mr Seymour, "it will be easily conceived that a vast variety of effects may be produced by varying the form, the shape, the distance, and the number of reflecting surfaces: and hence we hear of various surprising echoes in different places. It is not difficult, for instance, to understand the nature of compound, or tautological echoes; in which case the expression of one *ha* will appear like a laughter. Addison mentions an extraordinary instance of this kind near Milan, which will return the sound of a pistol fifty-six times."

"I have understood that the echoes on the lakes of Killarney are of this multiplied description," said the vicar.

"They are particularly calculated to produce reflections of sound, from the height of the mountains, and the expanse of water," replied Mr Seymour; "which latter circumstance always assists the conveyance of reflected as well as direct sound. I believe there is a certain spot on the shore of Ross island, where the sound of a bugle produces an echo which far exceeds any other to be met with amongst the lakes; the first echo is returned from the castle, the second from the ruined church of Aghadoe, the third from Mangerton, and afterwards innumerable reverberations are distinguished, which, like the faded brilliancy of an extremely multiplied reflection, are lost by distance and repetition."

"There is an admirable echo," said the vicar, "behind my old college at Cambridge; and often have I, while walking on the road to Chesterton, on a calm evening, distinctly heard twelve repetitions of the voice. Lord Bacon, if I remember correctly, mentions an instance of sixteen, in some ruined church near Paris."

"It was in the church of Pont-Charenton, on the Seine," replied Mr Seymour; "in which place that great philosopher discovered the inability of an echo to return the letter S; for having pronounced the word *Satan*, the echo replied *va-t-en—away*; from which circumstance, the Parisians concluded that some guardian spirit prevented the walls of the sacred edifice from pronouncing the name of *Satan*."

"And will not an echo repeat the letter S?" asked Louisa.

"Not always," answered her father; "the hissing or sibilant noise of the letter, when at the commencement of a word, is generally lost, unless the echo be extremely perfect."

Mr Seymour was here reminded of an echo on the Rhine, near the ruin of Rheinfels, to which is usually addressed the question—"Who is the Mayor of Oberwesel?" the echo answers *Esel*,*—an Ass.

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* The stand upon which the painter rests his picture is termed an *Esel*, from its carrying, like the ass, the burthen on his back.

"To be sure," said the vicar, "the latter syllables returned by the echo are those which retain possession of the ear. My young friends, no doubt, remember the facetious dialogue between Juvenis and Echo in the colloquy of Erasmus, in which a very humorous application is made of this circumstance."

The party now set off on their excursion to the valley. Mr Seymour disposed them in such situations as were best calculated to display the powers of the echo, and to illustrate the several effects which he had endeavoured to explain. The vicar performed his experiment with dactyles and spondees, and was highly gratified to find that their results proved, in a most satisfactory manner, the correctness of his conjecture. The attention of Miss Villers was particularly directed to the effect of the voice of Mrs Seymour from the orchard gate, and which, she said, convinced her that the sound she had heard on the preceding evening must have arisen from the cause assigned to it.

After the party had fairly tired themselves by their converse with the airy and unsubstantial being, they descended to the sandstone rocks, which Mr Seymour pointed out as the local habitation of the solitary spirit. These were duly examined by Louisa and Tom, and their operation as a reflecting screen was pointed out to them by their father.

"I can now perfectly understand the possible deceptions to which an echo can give rise," said Miss Villers; "and I have no doubt that many sounds, to which credulity has given a supernatural origin, may thus receive a ready explanation."

"Without doubt," repeated Mr Seymour; "and I will give you an example, which just at this moment occurs to me. The miners of Cornwall, a very superstitious race, entertain a notion that little spirits, or fairies, whom they call '*Piskeys*,' are ever working in the richest parts of the mine, to which their prescience had directed them, and that when their pickaxes are heard, it may be taken for granted that some rich ore abounds in the neighbourhood. We may very safely accept the conclusion, while we reject the superstition: the explanation is simply this:—that cavities in the rock are geologically associated with an accumulation of ore; the sound, therefore, heard by the working miner is but the reverberation of his own pickaxe, from some contiguous cavity."

The major was greatly interested by this discussion, and amused the party by relating the experience he had gained from echoes and vibrations during the progress of a siege: he said that he had himself heard in a "listening gallery," during a mining operation, the stroke of the pick; and that by the vibration of a pea placed upon a tightly-braced drum, he had discovered the subterraneous workmen at the distance of sixty feet.

The party now returned to the geological temple: its singularly-beautiful pillars very naturally attracted the attention of Miss Villers, and she expressed a wish that Mr Seymour should describe the plan of their construction: for it was very evident, as she said, from the disposition of the specimens, that the arrangements had been directed with some view to geological illustration. Mr Seymour felt gratified by this request, and promised to comply with her wishes, as soon as he had finished the investigation of those laws by which the reflection of sound was governed.

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed the vicar, "the revels of our airy companion are ended; and I maintain that nothing can be more appropriate than the consideration of the objects for which Miss Villers has expressed so much interest. In truth, the history of Echo is classically associated with that of geology: by diving into the recesses of the rock, we do but pursue her descent from air to earth; for you, no doubt, remember that, after she had been deprived of her loquacity by Juno, she became enamoured of Narcissus, pined away, and was transformed into stone." *

"I cannot but admire the ingenuity with which you embellish every subject with classical decorations," replied Mr Seymour. "I was about," said he, "to explain to my young pupils the principle and construction of the Whispering Gallery in the dome of St Paul's; but it will, probably, be more convenient that I should postpone the consideration of this, and some other subjects in connexion with it, until after our return to the Lodge: I am not, however, disposed to pass over the fable of Echo and Narcissus, to which you have just alluded, without maintaining, in opposition to the critical disparagement of Addison, that it is one of the most beautiful myths of antiquity. Every stage of it appears to me to admit of an allegorical interpretation. Whether the poet was acquainted with the laws by which the reflection of sound and light is governed may certainly be questioned; but the fable undoubtedly shadows forth a remarkable example of poetic and retributive justice. Narcissus is represented as disdaining the plaintive appeal of *Reflected Sound*, and is sacrificed to the illusive charms of *Reflected Light*."

The vicar expressed himself as highly gratified by so novel and ingenious an interpretation; and Mr Seymour then proceeded to view the details of the geological temple, and the design of the pillars that had so agreeably excited the curiosity of Miss Villers.

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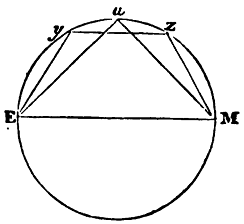
* Ovid, Metamorph. iii. 358.

CHAPTER XX.

On their return to the Lodge, Mr Seymour proceeded with the explanation of the Whispering Gallery in St Paul's Cathedral; and, in order to render intelligible the manner in which sound is concentrated, and thereby magnified, in that hollow hemisphere, he produced a diagram, of which the annexed cut is a copy.



He explained it as follows:—

"M shows the situation of the mouth of the speaker, and E that of the ear of the hearer. Now, since sound radiates in all directions, a part of it will proceed directly from M to E, while other rays of it will proceed from M to *u*, and from M to *z*, &c.; but the ray that impinges upon *u*, will be reflected to E, while that which first touches *z* will be reflected to *y*, and from thence to E; and so of all intermediate rays, which are omitted in the figure, to avoid confusion. It is evident, therefore, that the sound at E will be much stronger than if it had proceeded immediately from M without the assistance of the dome; for, in that case, the rays at *z* and *u* would have proceeded in straight lines, and consequently could never have arrived at the point E."

"I have understood that a similar effect was formerly witnessed in the stone recesses on Westminster Bridge," said the vicar.

"That is the fact," replied Mr Seymour. "The recesses to which you allude were semi-domes; and if a person whispered in the focus of one of them, he was distinctly heard by another stationed in the focus of the opposite one. Two inanimate busts may be thus made to appear as if holding a conversation, by placing them in the foci of two large concave mirrors constructed of pasteboard, and arranged opposite to each other; when a whisper uttered to the one will seem to proceed from the other by the reflection of sound."

Mr Seymour now removed a shell from a group of corallines, which decorated a part of the temple, and desired Tom to place it to his ear.

"I hear a noise which appears to me to resemble that of the sea," cried Tom.

"Ay," said the vicar, "and there is a popular belief that it is the murmur of the sea, which the shell actually sends forth, betraying, as it were, its marine origin."*

"And what produces the sound?" inquired Louisa.

"The interior of the shell merely concentrates, and thus magnifies the sounds around us, so as to render them audible: a goblet applied to the ear, will be found to produce the same effect," replied her father.

"I suppose it is upon the same principle that the speaking-trumpet is made to convey sound to a distance," remarked Louisa.

"Since sound radiates in all directions, it follows that, if such radiation be prevented by confining it in tubes, it may be carried to a great distance with very little diminution of its effect; and hence the use and application of those trumpets, or tin speaking-pipes, which are now commonly used for conveying intelligence from one part of a house to another. The trumpet used by deaf persons acts on the same principle; but as the voice enters the trumpet at the large instead of the small end of the instrument, it is not so much confined, nor is the sound so much increased."

"I believe," said Mrs Seymour, "that the experiment exhibited some time since in London under the title of the *Invisible Girl*, and which excited such general curiosity, was discovered to depend upon an arrangement of this kind."

The vicar observed, that it was found out by his late friend Dr Milner, the learned and scientific President of Queen's College, Cambridge.

"I expected that you would allude to that exhibition," said Mr Seymour; "and as I was anxious to provide my young pupils with some new amusement, as a reward for their industry, I have directed Tom Plank to construct the necessary apparatus for exhibiting and explaining the deception."

Upon inquiry, Mr Seymour found, as he had anticipated, that the necessary apparatus for the experiment of the "Invisible Girl" had been duly arranged, and that Tom Plank was in attendance to afford any assistance which might be farther required. We shall proceed to describe all the visible mechanism, as it appeared to the children on entering Mr Seymour's study, and of which we here present the reader with a perspective sketch.

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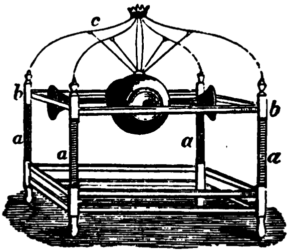
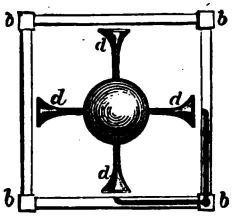
* "Apply
The polish'd lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs, as the ocean murmurs there."



It consisted of a wooden frame, not very unlike a bedstead, having four upright posts, *a a a a*, and a cross-rail at top and bottom to strengthen them. The frame thus constructed stood upon a low table, and from the top of each of the four pillars sprang four bent brass wires, which converged to the point *c*. From these wires a hollow copper ball was suspended by ribands, so as to cut off all possible communication with the frame. The globe was supposed to contain the invisible being, as the voice apparently proceeded from the interior of it; and for this purpose it was equipped with the mouths of four trumpets, placed around it in a horizontal direction, and at right angles to each other, as shown in the annexed section, in which the globe is represented in the centre; *d d d d* are the trumpets, and *b b b b* the frame surrounding them, at the distance of about half-an-inch from their mouths. Such as we have described was the apparatus, which had been constructed under the direction of Mr Seymour, who informed the party that, if any of them would ask a question of his little fairy, and direct the voice into one of the trumpets, an answer would immediately be returned from the ball.



"Let me interrogate her," exclaimed Louisa, as she advanced towards the railing. "Tell me, mysterious being, the name of the person who now addresses you."

"Miss Louisa Seymour," answered a voice, sufficiently audible to Louisa, and yet so distant and feeble, that it appeared as if coming from a very diminutive being, and thus heightened the deception.

"Now, vicar, it is your turn," said Mr Seymour.

"Well, then, I will try whether I cannot puzzle your Delphic lady;" and accordingly, applying his mouth to the trumpet, Mr Twaddleton demanded an interpretation of the following charade:—My *First* makes my *Second*, and fancies he is my *Whole*?"

"What is her answer?" anxiously inquired the party.

"As prompt as it is correct. She tells me it is PATRIOT."

"Let Miss Villers advance: she has so lately distinguished herself by her beautiful enigma, that I have no doubt she will now favour us with one that will try the skill of the Oracle, and delight us with its composition," said Mrs Seymour.

"After that very pretty speech, it would be affectation on my part to refuse; but you really, my dear Mrs Seymour, place too great a value upon my humble efforts." Miss Villers, accordingly, slowly and distinctly enunciated the following lines in the ear of the trumpet:—

"My *First* 's a conveyance that's oft on the stand,
And yet none more private careers in the land;
Nor wheels, nor e'en horses, are for it e'er needed,
And still by five couriers 'tis ever preceded.
So quick has it moved that, in England on Sunday,
It 's been found in the midst of Morocco on Monday.
When by rough work and wearing 'tis no longer sound,
By applying my *Second* a cure has been found.
My *Whole* is a terror to all who may travel;
So pray, gentle lady, this riddle unravel."

"Who can make it out?" asked Tom.

"Have patience for the response," said the vicar.

"She tells me she requires time," observed Miss Villers.

"Very well: lend your ear, and let us know when the inspiration comes upon her."

"She now rings a bell to announce, I suppose, that she is ready with her answer. Yes; here it is:"—

"To unravel your riddle I quickly essay'd,
With what skill you will presently learn:
That is, if my answer, in riddle convey'd,
Is by you understood in its turn.
Know, then, that your FIRST is lively and gay,
Though of food it never can taste,
And still it for ever is picking away,
Except when it travels in haste.
All wet is its horror, so tender its frame,
And yet at a spring it will jump;
But what must appear a strange part of its game,
To keep dry it will fly to a pump!
When tender, or tired, how refresh'd by green grass!
As it wanders through meadow or lawn,
Yet it is not a horse, a cow, or an ass,
For it hates every species of corn.
Of your SECOND, my friend, I've a story in store,
That perhaps may give you a shock,
For I found it attach'd to Newgate's dark door
The moment I wrench'd off its lock.
In the cell thus exposed I most anxiously look'd,
And saw with the eye of a mole,
A wretch there immured, and for punishment book'd,
And in him I discover'd your WHOLE."

"Now, then, who is prepared to interpret the Sibyl's answer?" asked the vicar.

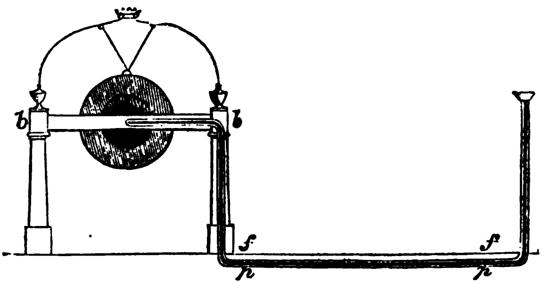
"I believe I can guess its meaning," answered Mr Seymour. And well he might, for he had concocted the whole affair in concert with Miss Villers.

After much questioning and puzzling, as usually happens upon such occasions, Mrs Seymour declared the mysterious word to be FOOTPAD: and she was right, and the rest of the party concurred in that decision; although there was one point that Tom did not comprehend, and that was how the *Second* could be "found on Newgate's dark door."

"Why, my dear boy," said the vicar, "even dull as I usually am upon these occasions, I very readily solved that mystery. Did he not find a *Pad*lock upon '*Newgate's dark door?*' and by taking off the lock, leave his 'second,' PAD?"

The charade having been thus explained to the satisfaction of the whole party, the next question which engaged their attention was the construction of the apparatus, by which the voice was so mysteriously conveyed to the ear.

Tom examined the ball, the trumpets, and the framework; but he was unable to discover any clue by which he could unravel the mystery. At length Mr Seymour proceeded to the explanation. He told them that the mechanism owed its effects to the combined operation of two principles with which they were already acquainted; the concentration and conveyance of sound by means of a speaking-pipe, and its reflection from an appropriate surface so as to change its apparent direction, by producing an artificial echo. He then showed them the pipe which was concealed in one of the legs of the frame, and explained in what manner the voice of Tom Plank, who had been stationed in an adjoining room, was conveyed to the mouth of the trumpet, and thence reflected to the ear of the observer. By means of the annexed section, we shall hope to render this subject as intelligible to our readers as did Mr Seymour to his little pupils.



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* The stand upon which the painter rests his picture is termed an *Esel*, from its carrying, like the ass, the burthen on his back.

"To be sure," said the vicar, "the latter syllables returned by the echo are those which retain possession of the ear. My young friends, no doubt, remember the facetious dialogue between Juvenis and Echo in the colloquy of Erasmus, in which a very humorous application is made of this circumstance."

The party now set off on their excursion to the valley. Mr Seymour disposed them in such situations as were best calculated to display the powers of the echo, and to illustrate the several effects which he had endeavoured to explain. The vicar performed his experiment with dactyles and spondees, and was highly gratified to find that their results proved, in a most satisfactory manner, the correctness of his conjecture. The attention of Miss Villers was particularly directed to the effect of the voice of Mrs Seymour from the orchard gate, and which, she said, convinced her that the sound she had heard on the preceding evening must have arisen from the cause assigned to it.

After the party had fairly tired themselves by their converse with the airy and unsubstantial being, they descended to the sandstone rocks, which Mr Seymour pointed out as the local habitation of the solitary spirit. These were duly examined by Louisa and Tom, and their operation as a reflecting screen was pointed out to them by their father.

"I can now perfectly understand the possible deceptions to which an echo can give rise," said Miss Villers; "and I have no doubt that many sounds, to which credulity has given a supernatural origin, may thus receive a ready explanation."

"Without doubt," repeated Mr Seymour; "and I will give you an example, which just at this moment occurs to me. The miners of Cornwall, a very superstitious race, entertain a notion that little spirits, or fairies, whom they call '*Piskeys*,' are ever working in the richest parts of the mine, to which their prescience had directed them, and that when their pickaxes are heard, it may be taken for granted that some rich ore abounds in the neighbourhood. We may very safely accept the conclusion, while we reject the superstition: the explanation is simply this:—that cavities in the rock are geologically associated with an accumulation of ore; the sound, therefore, heard by the working miner is but the reverberation of his own pickaxe, from some contiguous cavity."

The major was greatly interested by this discussion, and amused the party by relating the experience he had gained from echoes and vibrations during the progress of a siege: he said that he had himself heard in a "listening gallery," during a mining operation, the stroke of the pick; and that by the vibration of a pea placed upon a tightly-braced drum, he had discovered the subterraneous workmen at the distance of sixty feet.

The party now returned to the geological temple: its singularly-beautiful pillars very naturally attracted the attention of Miss Villers, and she expressed a wish that Mr Seymour should describe the plan of their construction: for it was very evident, as she said, from the disposition of the specimens, that the arrangements had been directed with some view to geological illustration. Mr Seymour felt gratified by this request, and promised to comply with her wishes, as soon as he had finished the investigation of those laws by which the reflection of sound was governed.

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed the vicar, "the revels of our airy companion are ended; and I maintain that nothing can be more appropriate than the consideration of the objects for which Miss Villers has expressed so much interest. In truth, the history of Echo is classically associated with that of geology: by diving into the recesses of the rock, we do but pursue her descent from air to earth; for you, no doubt, remember that, after she had been deprived of her loquacity by Juno, she became enamoured of Narcissus, pined away, and was transformed into stone." *

"I cannot but admire the ingenuity with which you embellish every subject with classical decorations," replied Mr Seymour. "I was about," said he, "to explain to my young pupils the principle and construction of the Whispering Gallery in the dome of St Paul's; but it will, probably, be more convenient that I should postpone the consideration of this, and some other subjects in connexion with it, until after our return to the Lodge: I am not, however, disposed to pass over the fable of Echo and Narcissus, to which you have just alluded, without maintaining, in opposition to the critical disparagement of Addison, that it is one of the most beautiful myths of antiquity. Every stage of it appears to me to admit of an allegorical interpretation. Whether the poet was acquainted with the laws by which the reflection of sound and light is governed may certainly be questioned; but the fable undoubtedly shadows forth a remarkable example of poetic and retributive justice. Narcissus is represented as disdaining the plaintive appeal of *Reflected Sound*, and is sacrificed to the illusive charms of *Reflected Light*."

The vicar expressed himself as highly gratified by so novel and ingenious an interpretation; and Mr Seymour then proceeded to view the details of the geological temple, and the design of the pillars that had so agreeably excited the curiosity of Miss Villers.

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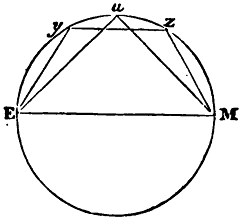
* Ovid, Metamorph. iii. 358.

CHAPTER XX.

ON their return to the Lodge, Mr Seymour proceeded with the explanation of the Whispering Gallery in St Paul's Cathedral; and, in order to render intelligible the manner in which sound is concentrated, and thereby magnified, in that hollow hemisphere, he produced a diagram, of which the annexed cut is a copy.



He explained it as follows:—

"M shows the situation of the mouth of the speaker, and E that of the ear of the hearer. Now, since sound radiates in all directions, a part of it will proceed directly from M to E, while other rays of it will proceed from M to *u*, and from M to *z*, &c.; but the ray that impinges upon *u*, will be reflected to E, while that which first touches *z* will be reflected to *y*, and from thence to E; and so of all intermediate rays, which are omitted in the figure, to avoid confusion. It is evident, therefore, that the sound at E will be much stronger than if it had proceeded immediately from M without the assistance of the dome; for, in that case, the rays at *z* and *u* would have proceeded in straight lines, and consequently could never have arrived at the point E."

"I have understood that a similar effect was formerly witnessed in the stone recesses on Westminster Bridge," said the vicar.

"That is the fact," replied Mr Seymour. "The recesses to which you allude were semi-domes; and if a person whispered in the focus of one of them, he was distinctly heard by another stationed in the focus of the opposite one. Two inanimate busts may be thus made to appear as if holding a conversation, by placing them in the foci of two large concave mirrors constructed of pasteboard, and arranged opposite to each other; when a whisper uttered to the one will seem to proceed from the other by the reflection of sound."

Mr Seymour now removed a shell from a group of corallines, which decorated a part of the temple, and desired Tom to place it to his ear.

"I hear a noise which appears to me to resemble that of the sea," cried Tom.

"Ay," said the vicar, "and there is a popular belief that it is the murmur of the sea, which the shell actually sends forth, betraying, as it were, its marine origin."*

"And what produces the sound?" inquired Louisa.

"The interior of the shell merely concentrates, and thus magnifies the sounds around us, so as to render them audible: a goblet applied to the ear, will be found to produce the same effect," replied her father.

"I suppose it is upon the same principle that the speaking-trumpet is made to convey sound to a distance," remarked Louisa.

"Since sound radiates in all directions, it follows that, if such radiation be prevented by confining it in tubes, it may be carried to a great distance with very little diminution of its effect; and hence the use and application of those trumpets, or tin speaking-pipes, which are now commonly used for conveying intelligence from one part of a house to another. The trumpet used by deaf persons acts on the same principle; but as the voice enters the trumpet at the large instead of the small end of the instrument, it is not so much confined, nor is the sound so much increased."

"I believe," said Mrs Seymour, "that the experiment exhibited some time since in London under the title of the *Invisible Girl*, and which excited such general curiosity, was discovered to depend upon an arrangement of this kind."

The vicar observed, that it was found out by his late friend Dr Milner, the learned and scientific President of Queen's College, Cambridge.

"I expected that you would allude to that exhibition," said Mr Seymour; "and as I was anxious to provide my young pupils with some new amusement, as a reward for their industry, I have directed Tom Plank to construct the necessary apparatus for exhibiting and explaining the deception."

Upon inquiry, Mr Seymour found, as he had anticipated, that the necessary apparatus for the experiment of the "Invisible Girl" had been duly arranged, and that Tom Plank was in attendance to afford any assistance which might be farther required. We shall proceed to describe all the visible mechanism, as it appeared to the children on entering Mr Seymour's study, and of which we here present the reader with a perspective sketch.

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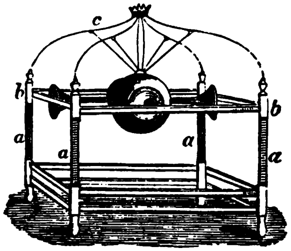
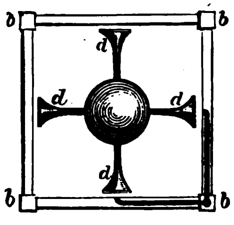
* "Apply
The polish'd lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs, as the ocean murmurs there."



It consisted of a wooden frame, not very unlike a bedstead, having four upright posts, *a a a a*, and a cross-rail at top and bottom to strengthen them. The frame thus constructed stood upon a low table, and from the top of each of the four pillars sprang four bent brass wires, which converged to the point *c*. From these wires a hollow copper ball was suspended by ribands, so as to cut off all possible communication with the frame. The globe was supposed to contain the invisible being, as the voice apparently proceeded from the interior of it; and for this purpose it was equipped with the mouths of four trumpets, placed around it in a horizontal direction, and at right angles to each other, as shown in the annexed section, in which the globe is represented in the centre; *d d d d* are the trumpets, and *b b b b* the frame surrounding them, at the distance of about half-an-inch from their mouths. Such as we have described was the apparatus, which had been constructed under the direction of Mr Seymour, who informed the party that, if any of them would ask a question of his little fairy, and direct the voice into one of the trumpets, an answer would immediately be returned from the ball.



"Let me interrogate her," exclaimed Louisa, as she advanced towards the railing. "Tell me, mysterious being, the name of the person who now addresses you."

"Miss Louisa Seymour," answered a voice, sufficiently audible to Louisa, and yet so distant and feeble, that it appeared as if coming from a very diminutive being, and thus heightened the deception.

"Now, vicar, it is your turn," said Mr Seymour.

"Well, then, I will try whether I cannot puzzle your Delphic lady;" and accordingly, applying his mouth to the trumpet, Mr Twaddleton demanded an interpretation of the following charade:—My *First* makes my *Second*, and fancies he is my *Whole?*"

"What is her answer?" anxiously inquired the party.

"As prompt as it is correct. She tells me it is PATRIOT."

"Let Miss Villers advance: she has so lately distinguished herself by her beautiful enigma, that I have no doubt she will now favour us with one that will try the skill of the Oracle, and delight us with its composition," said Mrs Seymour.

"After that very pretty speech, it would be affectation on my part to refuse; but you really, my dear Mrs Seymour, place too great a value upon my humble efforts." Miss Villers, accordingly, slowly and distinctly enunciated the following lines in the ear of the trumpet:—

"My *First* 's a conveyance that's oft on the stand,
And yet none more private careers in the land;
Nor wheels, nor e'en horses, are for it e'er needed,
And still by five couriers 'tis ever preceded.
So quick has it moved that, in England on Sunday,
It 's been found in the midst of Morocco on Monday.
When by rough work and wearing 'tis no longer sound,
By applying my *Second* a cure has been found.
My *Whole* is a terror to all who may travel;
So pray, gentle lady, this riddle unravel."

"Who can make it out?" asked Tom.

"Have patience for the response," said the vicar.

"She tells me she requires time," observed Miss Villers.

"Very well: lend your ear, and let us know when the inspiration comes upon her."

"She now rings a bell to announce, I suppose, that she is ready with her answer. Yes; here it is:"—

"To unravel your riddle I quickly essay'd,
  With what skill you will presently learn:
That is, if my answer, in riddle convey'd,
  Is by you understood in its turn.
Know, then, that your FIRST is lively and gay,
  Though of food it never can taste,
And still it for ever is picking away,
  Except when it travels in haste.
All wet is its horror, so tender its frame,
  And yet at a spring it will jump;
But what must appear a strange part of its game,
  To keep dry it will fly to a pump!
When tender, or tired, how refresh'd by green grass!
  As it wanders through meadow or lawn,
Yet it is not a horse, a cow, or an ass,
  For it hates every species of corn.
Of your SECOND, my friend, I've a story in store,
  That perhaps may give you a shock,
For I found it attach'd to Newgate's dark door
  The moment I wrench'd off its lock.
In the cell thus exposed I most anxiously look'd,
  And saw with the eye of a mole,
A wretch there immured, and for punishment book'd,
  And in him I discover'd your WHOLE."

"Now, then, who is prepared to interpret the Sibyl's answer?" asked the vicar.

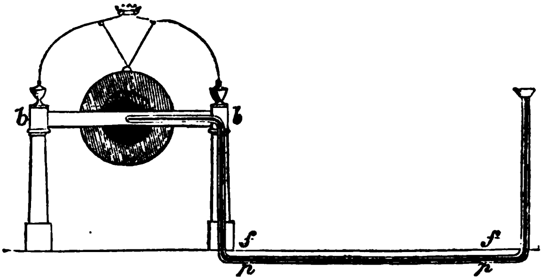
"I believe I can guess its meaning," answered Mr Seymour. And well he might, for he had concocted the whole affair in concert with Miss Villers.

After much questioning and puzzling, as usually happens upon such occasions, Mrs Seymour declared the mysterious word to be FOOTPAD: and she was right, and the rest of the party concurred in that decision; although there was one point that Tom did not comprehend, and that was how the *Second* could be "found on Newgate's dark door."

"Why, my dear boy," said the vicar, "even dull as I usually am upon these occasions, I very readily solved that mystery. Did he not find a *Pad*lock upon '*Newgate's dark door?*' and by taking off the lock, leave his 'second,' PAD?"

The charade having been thus explained to the satisfaction of the whole party, the next question which engaged their attention was the construction of the apparatus, by which the voice was so mysteriously conveyed to the ear.

Tom examined the ball, the trumpets, and the framework; but he was unable to discover any clue by which he could unravel the mystery. At length Mr Seymour proceeded to the explanation. He told them that the mechanism owed its effects to the combined operation of two principles with which they were already acquainted; the concentration and conveyance of sound by means of a speaking-pipe, and its reflection from an appropriate surface so as to change its apparent direction, by producing an artificial echo. He then showed them the pipe which was concealed in one of the legs of the frame, and explained in what manner the voice of Tom Plank, who had been stationed in an adjoining room, was conveyed to the mouth of the trumpet, and thence reflected to the ear of the observer. By means of the annexed section, we shall hope to render this subject as intelligible to our readers as did Mr Seymour to his little pupils.



b b represent two of the legs of the frame, one of which, as well as half the rail, is made into a tube, the end of which opens immediately opposite to the centre of the trumpet. This hole is very small, and concealed by mouldings; the other end communicates by a tin pipe, *p p*, which passes in a concealed manner along the floor of the room, into an adjoining closet, where the confederate is concealed. It is evident that any sound, directed into the mouth of the trumpet will be immediately reflected back to the orifice of the tube, and distinctly heard by a person who places his ear to the mouth of the funnel, *m;* while the answer returned by him, travelling along the tin funnel, *p p*, will issue from its concealed orifice, and striking upon the concave surface of the trumpet, be returned to the ear as an echo, and thus appear as if it had proceeded from the interior of the ball.

The vicar observed, that this deception of the *Invisible Girl*, which had formerly created so much interest, was little more than the revival of the old and well-known mechanism of the *speaking bust*,* which consisted of a tube, from the mouth of a bust, leading to a confederate in an adjoining room, and of another tube to the same place, ending in the ear of the figure; by the latter of which a sound whispered in the ear of the bust was immediately carried to the confederate, who instantly returned an answer by the other tube, ending in the mouth of the figure, which therefore appeared to utter it. "The Invisible Girl," continued the vicar, "evidently only differs from that contrivance in this single circumstance, that an artificial echo is produced by means of the trumpet, and thus the sound no longer appears to proceed in its original direction."

"Your remark is perfectly correct, my dear vicar," said Mr Seymour.

Tom Plank, with an air of self-satisfaction, at this moment emerged from his retreat, and inquired whether his performance had met with the approbation of the company.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Plank, "as I am now fully satisfied that any plan of propelling live and dead luggage through funnels can never succeed, I propose to employ tubes for conveying sounds to a great distance, so as to do away with the use of telegraphs."

"Why, that plan is more practicable, but less novel, than the one you have just abandoned," answered Mr Seymour. "At the latter end of the last century, a man of the name of Gautier conceived a method of transmitting articulate sounds to an immense distance. He proposed the construction of horizontal tunnels that should widen at their extremities, by means of which the ticking of a watch might be heard more distinctly at the distance of two hundred feet than when placed close to the ear. I think he calculated that a succession of such tunnels would transmit a verbal message nine hundred miles in an hour." (55.)

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* In *Evelyn's Diary* we find the following entry:—"1654, July 13. Dined with Dr Wilkins at Wadham College. He had contrived a hollow statue which gave a voice, and uttered words by a long concealed pipe that went to its mouth, whilst one speaks through it, at a good distance."

"Only think of that!" ejaculated Tom Plank; "to make a communication from London to Edinburgh in about twenty-five minutes!"

"True, my friend; but what would you say were I to play Puck with you, and suggest a method of communicating information to any distance without the loss even of a single second of time?" (56.)

"There now!" cried the vicar, "you have supplied Tom Plank with some fresh barm to set his brains working."

"He is an indefatigable fellow, I must allow," said Mr Seymour.

After this discourse the vicar rose from his seat, and on walking across the room, the creaking of his shoes excited the attention of Mr Seymour, who, with his accustomed gaiety, observed, that "the vicar had music in his *sole*."

"Mr Seymour!" exclaimed Mr Twaddleton, with a look which we should in vain endeavour to describe, "the infirmity of my shoes, *crepitus crepidæ*, is at all events sanctioned by high antiquity; for we are told by Philostratus, in his Epistles, that Vulcan, being jealous of Venus, made her creaking shoes, in order that he might hear whenever she stirred."

So ludicrous an appeal to antiquity would have overcome Heraclitus himself; no wonder then that the whole party enjoyed a hearty laugh at the worthy vicar's expense.

"Well, Mr Twaddleton, if, as you say, I have brought down philosophy to account for the most familiar occurrences, it is but just that I should return the compliment, by declaring that you are equally prepared to throw a classical interest around the humblest as well as the most dignified subject, *a capite usque ad calcem*," observed Mr Seymour.

"Now, Tom, as you have so lately been instructed in the different sources of sound, do tell your good friend, the vicar, the cause of the creaking of his shoes," said his father.

"The dryness of the leather, I suppose," answered the young philosopher.

"A certain state of dryness is certainly a necessary condition, or else the cohesion between the inner and outer sole would exclude the air. Correctly speaking, the creaking depends upon the sudden compression of the air contained between the two surfaces of leather; just as a sound is produced by the clapping of the hands by the air thus set in vibration. Shoes with single soles, therefore, never creak, and by interposing a piece of oil-silk between the two soles, you will so far insure the contact of their surfaces as to obviate the sound."

"That is at all events a piece of practical philosophy worth knowing; and I shall accordingly instruct my operator, Jerry Styles, upon this point," observed the vicar.

"So you see, my dear Sir, I am no bad shoemaker, although I have never yet made a shoe."

"To be sure—to be sure," exclaimed the vicar; "for as Horace has it—

> "'. . . . sapiens crepidas sibi nunquam
> Nec soleas fecit; sutor tamen est sapiens.'" *
> *Hor.*, lib. i., sat. 3.

"You never made a happier quotation," exclaimed Mr Seymour.

"I have only one other remark to make," continued he, "which the consideration of this subject has very naturally suggested—that the various strange sounds, which have from time to time alarmed the superstitious, may be readily explained upon the simple principles we have been discussing. I well remember a whole family having been thrown into a state of terror, by a mysterious sound which regularly recurred every evening; when it was at length disovered to arise from the crawling of snails over the window; their slimy surfaces, as they moved along, produced a friction, which occasioned a vibration of the glass."

"And I never recall to my recollection, without some degree of terror," said the vicar, "the night I passed in an old oaken chamber which had the reputation of being haunted. A bright fire cheerfully blazed in the grate as I entered the apartment, and casting its ruddy light around, in some measure dissipated the prejudice which had been raised to the disparagement of my dormitory; but awaking in the night, my fire was out, and a succession of the most extraordinary noises I ever heard assailed me."

"All which are easily explicable," said Mr Seymour. "The old oaken materials were expanded by the heat of your fire, and on the apartment cooling, they again contracted, and gave origin to all the sounds you describe."

"How unsparingly does science clip the wings of imagination!" observed Miss Villers.

"Reverting to the more humble subject of shoemaking," said Mr Seymour, "let me ask the vicar, whether he remembers the receipt of Orator Henley, for making a pair in a few minutes."

"I remember it well; he collected a number of shoemakers by promising to impart his great secret to them; and this wonderful abridgment of time and labour was exhibited to his gaping auditors by cutting off the tops of a ready-made pair of boots!"

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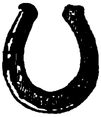
* "For though the wise nor shoes nor slippers made,
He's yet a skilful shoemaker by trade."

"I think," said Mr Seymour, "when Tom has solved the enigma I am about to propose, you will allow that, as a paradoxical shoemaker, I have fairly beaten the Orator out of the field."

"A shoemaker once made shoes without leather,
With all the four elements join'd together;
There were FIRE and WATER, and EARTH too, and AIR,
And most of his customers wanted two pair."



"There sits our philosopher of the Porch," said Mr Seymour; "I knew we should find him on duty."
—P. 259.

CHAPTER XXI.

FOR some time had Major Snapwell been occupied in making arrangements for an event, which he hailed not only as the accomplishment of his most ardent wishes, but as the guarantee of his future happiness. We did not think it right to impart this secret to our readers, until the period should arrive when, in conformity with the usage of the world, the subject might be referred to without reserve or impropriety. To such a period has our history arrived, and we shall therefore at once communicate the whole story, by relating the substance of a conversation which took place between Major Snapwell and the vicar, in the presence of Mr and Mrs Seymour, in the library of Overton Lodge.

"Your hand, my dearest friend! your hand, and with it the congratulations of your heart," exclaimed the major, as he approached Mr Twaddleton; "our friends here," added he, as he bowed to Mr and Mrs Seymour, "are already acquainted with the proposed union between my worthy nephew, Henry Beecham, and the charming

Isabella Villers; and may Heaven shed the dew of its blessing upon them!"

"Amen!" ejaculated the vicar.

"Well, Sir, I am most anxious that the ceremony should take place at Overton, and that you should officiate upon the occasion."

"Most cheerfully shall I comply with your request; '*connubio jungam stabili*,' as the immortal poet has it."

"I have also to inform you," continued the major, "that it is my wish to diffuse a portion of that delight, which this event will impart to me, over the neighbourhood in which I shall probably pass the days that may be yet spared to me; listen, therefore, to the scheme which I have devised for carrying this into effect. I design to give a public entertainment, upon a plan as novel as its scale shall be extensive; it shall not be a mere blaze of the spirits, but the recreation of the mind, and the jubilee of reason."

"An entertainment," muttered the vicar, whose countenance afforded anything but encouragement to such a scheme.

"Ay, vicar; an entertainment which shall be conducted with every regard to ancient usage and classical correctness," said the major, as he cast a sly glance at Mr Seymour.

The countenance of the vicar brightened; and he begged his worthy friend to be more explicit, and to state the nature of his intended fête.

"I have just told you that this boy of mine is shortly to conduct Miss Villers to the temple of Hymen; I would seize that happy occasion for giving a rural fête, in my park, to the inhabitants of Overton and its neighbourhood; and, as there are no less than three events which I am anxious to celebrate, I propose that this same fête shall be continued through three successive days. On the first shall be commemorated the providential escape of my nephew from shipwreck; on the second, his marriage; and on the third, my purchase and occupation of Osterley Park. What think you of my plan?"

"Why, truly, that it would admit of much appropriate pageantry, and be countenanced by classical authority: Augustus triumphed three days, for the purpose of commemorating three great events; the first of which was the defeat of the Pannonians and Dalmatii; the second, the battle of Actium; and the third, the reduction of Egypt. Then, again, we have the *Ludi Magni* of the Romans, and the solemn Athenian feast, *Apaturia*, which lasted during three days; and, above all, the secular games, which were continued through the same period. In the face of such authorities, it would ill become the classical scholar to offer any objection; although, as vicar of the parish, I cannot conscientiously close my eyes against the evils which might possibly arise from such protracted revelry. I would therefore, with submission, propose that the three events to which you allude, the importance of which I most fully appreciate, should be celebrated by three distinct festivals on one and the same day."

The major saw plainly that the vicar might be made to approve of, or to dissent from any plan, by the dexterous use of classical authority; he therefore determined to use it, as he had so successfully done on former occasions, as a talisman for the accomplishment of his purpose.

"I like your proposition," observed the major, "but I greatly fear that you will not be able to support it by any classical authority; and, remember, I must have everything conducted in the strictest accordance with ancient usage."

"Your intention commands my profound respect," answered the vicar, "and I will not lose any time in searching the writings of Lipsius for a precedent, an author who has collected fifteen laws of the Roman entertainments; or, perhaps, the Pandects of Franciscus Modius, who has so ably treated of nuptial ceremonies, will furnish the desired information; but no matter, a precedent must be found, and I will produce it."

Mr Seymour here interrupted the conversation by inquiring of the major the plan of those amusements which he proposed to provide.

"My plan is to convert the elm-meadow at Osterley Park into a fair," said the major, "wherein every kind of amusement that I can command shall be exhibited—tumblers—rope-dancers—conjurors, and, in short, the whole merry train of Comus shall be pressed into our service; and, in spite of the Peace Congress, who have denounced Punch as the embodied spirit of pugnacity, I will never discard the old friend of my youth; he shall certainly be engaged to display his hereditary wit and mimic drolleries; and although as a needy vagabond he is at length doomed, by an ungrateful public, to roam about the world, like a snail, with his house on his back, let us not forget that the time was when, like Homer, cities contended for his birth."*

"I hope you will also engage the '*Fantoccini*' or '*Marionettes*,'"† said Louisa.

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* By many he has been considered of French origin; but Naples would appear to have the best claim to the honour. Mr Payne Collier makes our English Punch date from 1688, and brings him over from Holland in the same ship with William of Orange; M. Mangin joins issue with him on this point, and attempts to shew that he existed in the days of Elizabeth. In the early period of his career in England, we find Punch and *Punchinello* used indifferently. Under the name of *Ponchi* or *Ponki*, he has long figured in China as a dwarf. (When the new Police Act was under consideration, one of the clauses was struck out, lest, through a mistaken construction, Punch's liberty should be interfered with; that hero may, therefore, consider himself under the especial care of the legislature.—ED.)

† MARIONETTE, the French word for puppet, originally applied to the Virgin Mary, who, in the days of "*Mariolatry*," appeared in a sort of miracle play; but the term, like many others of the same kind, has lost its exclusive application. The earliest puppet was certainly the *Doll;* but it has been questioned whether it was the emblem of precocious maternity, or a symbol of religious veneration (*Penates*.) Did it spring from the hearth or the altar? The word *Doll* would seem to be a corruption of *Idol*.

"Undoubtedly; the '*machinæ gesticulantes*' have a classical claim to our regard, not only as having suggested to Goethe the notion of his immortal Faust, but as being honourably associated with the poetical muse of Addison, and the dramatic reminiscences of Ben Jonson."

Mrs Seymour here interposed, and begged to remind her friends that we were also indebted to the *Fantoccini* for one of Haydn's musical inspirations.*

"Nor will I withhold an offering," said her husband: "who does not remember with delight the inimitable scene of the Puppet Player in Don Quixote, in which the Knight makes so merciless an attack upon the mimic representatives of the Moors in defence of Don Gayferos and the fair Melisendra?"

This point having been settled, the major proceeded: "I will also provide platforms for those who may be disposed to weave the mazy dance, orchestras for music, and ornamented tents for refreshments. And I shall certainly call upon the vicar," added the major, with an arch smile, "to open the ball with the bride."

"Ay, my dear major, had I numbered a few olympiads less, I should indeed have felt flattered by so marked a distinction; but my age, my age," murmured Mr Twaddleton.

"Pooh, pooh—nonsense! find some classical authority to sanction my proposal."

"Your suggestion certainly merits attention, let me consider—Lucian—What says Lucian *de Saltatione*? No, stop, I have it! Socrates learned to dance very late in life; and Cato, notwithstanding his severity of manners, disdained not, at the age of sixty, to practise it. These are, doubtless, precedents of great weight and value; but, my dear friend, however much I may esteem them, and desire to gratify you, I do so sensibly feel the infirmity of age creeping over me, that I must respectfully decline the proffered compliment: besides, '*Est modus in rebus*' as Horace says: only consider a solemn old man, as I am, in black, amidst whirling forms of surpassing fairness. Why, I should look like a hearse in a snow-storm!"

The major was highly amused by so whimsical an apposition of discordant images; but ventured to suggest that Shakspeare might have supplied him with a much more lively illustration; "Why not, for instance, say, 'like a crow trooping with snowy doves?'"

"Very good; but I must beg you, in that case, to exclude the *Doves* of Epirus,† from your comparison," said the vicar.

The major proceeded with his plan, stating it to be his intention that a number of Lilliputian ships should perform various evolutions on the canal, and ultimately engage in mimic war—such cannonading! such explosions!

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* Haydn composed several operas for a Marionette Theatre, established in the Esterhazy's Castle of Eisenstadt, in Hungary, between 1773 and 1780.

† *πελειαὶ* signified *doves* in most parts of Greece, except in the dialect of Epirus, in which they implied *old women*.

"How charming! how very delightful and interesting!" exclaimed Louisa and Fanny; "but, pray, do allow Tom to leave school, in order that he may witness all these amusements, or, instead of pleasure we shall derive from them nothing but regret."

"Fear not, my dear little friends," exclaimed the major; "I shall insist upon that as a condition, and I am sure my request will be very cheerfully granted."

"Most certainly," said the father; "indeed, I shall be anxious to embrace so favourable an opportunity of explaining to my family the various tricks they will witness, and the machinery by which the deceptions will be accomplished: thus shall I convert what, to the common eye, will appear as a scene of idle revelry into a school of philosophy, and, in accordance with my favourite scheme, turn sport into science; and I shall, moreover, hope, by such means, to guard the rising generation against that infatuated credulity which is the bane and disgrace of the present age:—I allude to '*mesmeric*,' and other such similar deceptions, as '*electro-biology*,' '*table-turning*,' and '*spirit rapping*,' which, under the assumption of science, although opposed to its very first principles, dishonour the hallowed shrine of Truth, and convert its temple into a booth for the juggler." (17.)

"I quite agree with you," said the vicar; "there is no surer method of dissipating the illusions of the *Will-o'-the-Wisp* than by carrying a light in our hand."

"Upon my word, Mr Seymour, you are a perfect alchymist, and extract gold from everything you touch: you have already derived scientific information from the most miscellaneous and trifling amusements, and will, no doubt, upon the present occasion, convert our very pies and puddings into instruments of instruction; thus verifying the old adage, 'that there is reason in roasting an egg,'" said the major.

"By the by, are you aware of the philosophy which suggested that adage?" asked the vicar; "if not, I will tell you. You must know, then, that in the large end of the egg there is a little air-bag termed the *folliculus aëris*, and which is designed for furnishing a supply of air to the growing chick; now if an egg be suddenly exposed to the temperature of hot embers, this air will be so violently expanded as to burst the shell, and scatter its contents; to prevent such an accident, the provident housewife pricks the blunt end of the shell with a pin, in order to allow the expanded air to escape more gradually—so that there *is* reason, or philosophy, in the roasting an egg."

"Very good; I like your explanation; if not true, it has, at least, the merit of being ingenious, and, I will add, far more plausible than many of our recognised derivations," observed the major.

"Well, but we have interrupted the major in his delightful description: he had not concluded the account of his proposed fête," said Louisa.

"Pray, go on," cried Fanny; "let me see, where did you leave off? Oh, I remember, you were interrupted in a temporary tent, which I hope you intend to decorate with garlands."

"Leave all that to the vicar, young lady! he will, no doubt, display his classical taste in the emblematic appointments."

"I shall terminate the festivities of the day by a grand display of fireworks," continued the major, "and which will necessarily fall under my own more immediate direction. In all other matters I trust the vicar will allow me to proclaim him as master of the revels; for he is, as we all acknowledge, deeply versed in ancient customs, and I am especially anxious that every department should be conducted with the utmost classical taste and correctness."

"I willingly accept the office," said Mr Twaddleton, with a gracious smile, "since there is ample authority for my acquiescence. The Romans usually appointed a person, whom they styled king, and held responsible for the correctness of their entertainments. I accept it also on a different ground, that my presence may check the undue enthusiasm of the populace, and restrain the hilarity of the *saturnalia* within the boundary of decorum."

"If, in the arrangement of your banquet, my assistance can be useful, pray command my services," said Mrs Seymour.

"Believe me sincere, my dear madam, when I say that the kind manner in which you have received my plan, and now so kindly offer to promote its execution, affords me the highest gratification. If I decline your services, it will be from an unwillingness to usurp the sovereignty of our master of the ceremonies," replied the major.

"Not at all, not at all," hastily exclaimed the vicar; "do you expect me to discharge at once the offices of *Dapifer*, *Lardrenius*, *Magister Coquorum*, and *Prægustator?* I cannot undertake to descend into the lower regions, to hold converse with your ancient Sibyl, the cook; nor can I suppose that you would require me to marshal the dishes."

"Have I not declared that every part of my entertainment shall be strictly classical; and ought not each dish to convey some moral device, some allegorical design? Are we to feed with as little discrimination as the dogs that devoured the sacred Apis?" said the major."

The knowledge which the reader must have already collected of Mr Twaddleton's character will have satisfied him that, in every action of his life, he was more or less influenced by the spell of ancient authority; but we doubt whether he may not yet have to learn the extent to which this '*laudator temporis acti*' carried his enthusiasm. We shall accordingly beg to state a few instances, which will serve to enlighten him still farther upon this striking point in the vicar's character. Be it known, then, that the very first act which announced the preferment of the Reverend Peter Twaddleton to the dignity of Vicar of Overton, was not, as some might suppose, an increased rate of compensation for the tithes; nor was it a rate levied for the repairs of the church; but it was the removal of the rusty and rickety vane from the spire, which, as it consisted of a simple cross piece of iron, seemed to his imagination to be wriggling about, without any indication of its ancient and dignified origin. He therefore, at his own cost, replaced it by the figure of a cock, which he caused to be duly executed after the authentic model on the tower of his late college chapel. It will be remembered that the crowing of the cock warned Peter; for which reason the monks first placed the image of that bird on their churches, as an emblem to call people to prayers; and since the image was made to revolve with the wind, it soon acquired the name of the *weathercock*, an appellation which is now generally applied to every machine for indicating the direction of the wind, the derivation of the word being entirely lost sight of. With respect to the arrangement of his table, the vicar displayed an equal veneration for ancient forms. He perpetuated the use of the wassail-bowl, which was scrupulously prepared with apples and ale, according to the most orthodox receipt. His mince-pies at Christmas were fabricated with the same inflexible adherence to ancient authority; he maintained that the introduction of meat into their composition was a scandalous heresy; that the choicest productions of the East ought alone to be admitted, since the custom was originally intended to allegorise the offerings made by the wise men who came from afar to worship, bringing spices, &c. He was also equally critical with respect to the *shape* of these dainty inventions; he insisted upon the ancient form, which he stated to have been in imitation of the cratch, or manger, wherein the infant Jesus had lain. In the same spirit, he repudiated the *round* plum-pudding, and insisted upon the ancient form of the sausage, which distinguished that Christmas delicacy. Nor did he neglect to burn the "*yule-log*" on Christmas eve, nor to arrange a Christmas tree in the vicarage, for the delight of his younger parishioners (57), while the mistletoe bough was duly suspended from the ceiling. His table was, with the same antiquarian correctness, punctually supplied at Easter with a gammon of bacon; a custom which would have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance, since it was evidently founded on the abhorrence our forefathers thought proper to express towards the Jews at the season of commemorating the resurrection.* The idea was in direct opposition to the liberal sentiments of the vicar; but, being an ancient custom, he never ventured to question its propriety.

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* Drake's Shakspeare and his Times.

In like manner his tranquillity would have been sadly disturbed, had Annette ever forgotten the *pancakes* on Shrove Tuesday; for he was decidedly of opinion that it was a dish which had derived its origin from the heathen *Fornacalia*, a festival instituted by Numa,* in honour of the goddess Fornax; and was intended to commemorate the baking of bread before the invention of ovens. Upon the subject of "*cross-buns*" he displayed great profundity. He observed that the word *bun* was derived from *boun*, a species of sacred bread described by Hesychius, and which was anciently offered to the gods: in support of which opinion he quoted Julius Pollux and Diogenes Laërtius; nor did he relinquish the subject until he had ably descanted upon the address with which heathen customs had been, as it were, naturalised and perpetuated as Christian observances. The *boun*, he would say, lost its idolatrous impurity by receiving the sign of the cross,† just as Druidical idols, and "*stones-erect*," by having crosses engraven upon them, continued to receive a justifiable reverence, even as late as the seventh century.

In short, the extent to which our excellent but eccentric vicar was carried on such occasions can scarcely be credited, except by those who are acquainted with the extravagant whimsies of a *genuine* antiquary. We have never contemplated this part of his character without congratulating the rising generation at Overton on the circumstance of the offices of village schoolmaster and vicar of the parish not having centred in the same individual; for we have not the shadow of a doubt, so great was Mr Twaddleton's veneration for ancient usages, but he would have whipped up every child within his jurisdiction, on the morning of Childermas-day, or that of the Holy Innocents, as we are informed was the ancient custom, "in order that the memorial of Herod's murder of the Innocents might stick the closer." On the other hand, he would as readily have forgiven any offence, had the little culprit only cited a few lines from a favourite classic; for often had he been heard to relate, in terms of high admiration, the well-known story of the Athenian Captives, whose lives were spared in Sicily in consequence of their being able to repeat passages from Euripides.* Whether, in spite of the censure and remonstrance of St Austin, he would have ventured to continue the half-holiday on the Thursday, it is difficult to say, although the high antiquity of a custom, originally established in honour of Jupiter, would, no doubt, have produced its due influence upon the antiquary's decision.

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* Ovid, Fast. ii. v. 525.

† No one can entertain a greater respect for the classical authority of the vicar than the author of these pages; but he humbly submits that the custom of dividing the cake into four parts, quarters, or quadrants, by two straight lines drawn through the centre, claims a much higher antiquity than that here assigned to it. That cakes so divided were called *Quadræ* we have the authority of Virgil, which Mr Twaddleton would be the last to question—

> "——Patulis nec parcere Quadris."
> —Æn. vii. 115.

We might carry back still farther the origin of the *Bun*, for the Egyptians made cakes in honour of the moon, shaping them like horns, to denote the crescent. The Greeks followed, and called this kind of cake Βους, or bull, from its horned shape; the accusative of which, Βουν, *boun*, gave origin to the modern *bun*. So again *butter*, since the earliest was made from cows' milk alone, derived its name from Βους, and τυρος (a coagulum). Bun and butter, therefore, not only assimilate by alliteration and gastronomy, but by a common etymology; and we trust that an alliance so congenial to our tastes, as BUN and BUTTER, may never be dissolved, but

> That schoolboys, yet unborn, may utter
> The praises of their buns and butter.

One more anecdote, and we have done. The reader will remember that to Dr Doseall, the renowned Esculapius of Overton, the antiquary had given the title of *Polyphemus;* this might appear inconsistent with his known kindness and acknowledged liberality, and we therefore feel called upon to state his justification. "Was it not," he asked, "a notorious custom in Athens to give nicknames expressive of personal peculiarities? Do we not learn from Aristophanes that the poet Theognis, from the deficient warmth of his compositions, went by the name of '*Snow?*' and moreover, did not the Athenians, as a body, from their notorious passion for news, and their habit of swallowing open-mouthed the flying rumours of the day, receive the sobriquet of '*Gapers*,' just as the London inhabitants of the present day rejoice in that of '*Cockneys?*'" Doseall's medical practice was confessedly *blind* and *strong*, and hence the allusion to Polyphemus. We have thought it right to relate these few anecdotes, in order to vindicate the propriety of the major's choice, and to convince those whom it may concern, that a better classical master of the ceremonies could not have been selected.

After this explanation we may return, with a "clean breast," to the party whom we had rather abruptly quitted, and continue our relation of the conversation which followed.

"So, then, you have determined that the vicar shall superintend the banquet," said Mrs Seymour; "there is, however, one part of the ceremony which I shall certainly not feel disposed to resign, the ordering and disposition of the bridal cakes; the genius of Gunter, and his attendant spirits, shall be invoked to produce one of the most triumphant productions of art."

"Psha, nonsense! you surely would never countenance that ice-clad demon of indigestion," said the vicar.

"What do I hear? Why, zounds, vicar, do you expect me to submit to such vagaries? What! a wedding without a cake! it cannot be tolerated. I suppose I shall next hear of an English feast without roast beef," vociferated the major.

"Fear not, my dear major, for you shall certainly have your cake; but, in the name of all that is classical, let it be the true *Roman* bride-cake, made after the orthodox receipt which Cato has bequeathed to us in his work, '*De Re Rustica*' (cap. 121). You must be aware, Mr Seymour, that the *Mustacea* of the Romans, the species of cake used at weddings, consisted of meal, aniseed, cummin, and sundry other aromatic ingredients."

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* Athenian army, commanded by Nicias.—*Plutarch.*

"And do you seriously believe that any one of us will swallow such a medicated farrago?" said the major.

"The unenlightened may perhaps refuse it; and should the children prefer your modern counterfeit, they might stand excused, since classical inspiration rarely descends upon a boy until he has construed a Greek chorus," observed the vicar.

"Were I to swallow but a grain of it," said Mrs Seymour, "the services of Dr Doseall would be in speedy requisition."

"Mere prejudice, madam. The object, I may say the sole intention of the *Mustacea*, was actually to prevent or remove the indigestion which might be occasioned by too free an indulgence at the marriage-table; and I think it must be acknowledged that this spicy compound was better adapted for such a purpose than the modern sweetmeat to which it gave origin.

"With respect to the *roast beef*, to which the major has just alluded," continued the vicar, "I shall only observe, that until the reign of our eighth Henry, it does not appear to have taken any part in the formation of our national character."

"I would beg to inquire to whom the selection and arrangement of the comic entertainments are to be intrusted; unless the major should have already found a manager of mirth, I think I can recommend one who is admirably qualified for the duties," said Mr Seymour.

"That is lucky; I am at this moment in quest of some *Barnum*, 'guiltless of a country's shame,'" said the major.

"Ned Hopkins, then, who has for some time past taken up his abode at our village alehouse, is the very man you want; I have no doubt he will cheerfully undertake the office, and most satisfactorily discharge its motley duties."

"Good gracious! Ned Hopkins?" exclaimed the vicar, with much surprise, and no less indignation.

"To be sure; and who better understands the trim of the itinerant sons of Comus? Was not his father a mountebank doctor, an astrologer, and a professor of the art of legerdemain?"

"Do not suppose that I value Ned Hopkins the less on that account; for I well know that the immortal Virgil was the son of a servant, or assistant, to a wandering astrologer, or '*Medicus Magus*,' as Juvenal has it; and that the mother of Euripides was a cabbage-woman, for which Aristophanes so unjustifiably ridicules him. My dislike to Ned Hopkins arises from his sottish habits, his coarse jokes, and bacchanalian buffoonery."

"Ay," continued Mr Seymour, "and then again there are his vile puns and hackneyed proverbs; and yet you must confess that, after all, he is a very clever fellow."

"Clever fellow! why, truly, Satan does not usually select a fool as his ambassador," observed the vicar.

"Upon my word, gentlemen, this must needs be a most amusing fellow; and you have so far excited my curiosity as to make me very desirous of hearing something farther of his history and habits, and of having the opportunity of forming his acquaintance," said the major.

"He is one of those loose and buoyant spirits," replied Mr Seymour, "who thrive upon expedients; and measuring their consciences by their wants, derive a livelihood from sources, of which those who jog on quietly through the beaten paths of life have not the most remote conception. He commenced his career under the tutelage of the first fire-eaters of the day; but having clumsily scalded his mouth, and cooled his reputation, he bolted, and sought another stage for the display of his versatile genius. Possessed of a very considerable degree of native humour and caustic shrewdness, and having received an education far above his station, he engaged himself as a '*mercenary*,' or literary drudge, to a popular publisher of comic song-books, doleful ballads, sanguinary murders, magical magazines, amorous valentines, oracles of health, and plans for the reduction of all taxes, and the liquidation of the national debt; nor did he hesitate to promote the public health, and the welfare of the Life Assurance Societies, by vouching, under sundry feigned names, for the miraculous efficacy of those pills, elixirs, and *homœopathic* shams, by which all mortal maladies are said by ther Samaritan vendors to be averted or cured. These honourable occupations, as I have been credibly informed, produced for him, during a successful season, some twenty or thirty pounds in the lawful coin of the realm; but Ned, like many a great genius, was better pleased with an hour of idleness than with a week of study; and, strange to say, would at any time have preferred a cup of wine to a bucketful of the brightest water from Helicon. No sooner, therefore, had he collected a few pounds, then he descended from his *high* literary station (a garret), and taking up his abode in some hedge alehouse, enjoyed a life of happy leisure, until every particle of that worldly substance, which he had gained by inspiration from above, was gratefully returned to the skies in the form of tobacco-fumes. For some months past," added Mr Seymour, "he has been a constant inmate at the '*Bag of Nails*,' where, as I am led to believe, he pays for nothing but his tobacco; the worthy hostess, having found him a very profitable bait for customers, is too willing to barter the drippings of the kitchen for his sayings, and the leakage of the tap-room for his songs."

"I am quite impatient to be made acquainted with this comical character," said the major.

"Suppose we walk into the village," said Mr Seymour, "we shall be sure to find him smoking his pipe in the porch before the alehouse door; where he is as regularly stationed by his patroness to entrap customers, as the saucer of treacle is placed in the window by the pastrycook to catch flies."

"You will, of course, excuse my accompanying you," cried Mr Twaddleton, somewhat pettishly; "I cannot endure his stale jokes and potted stories."

The gentlemen accordingly directed their route through Forest Lane, and took leave of the vicar at the entrance of the churchyard. On arriving within twenty yards of the public-house, Mr Seymour observed a wreath of smoke curling and whirling around it. "There sits our 'philosopher of the Porch,'" said he; "I knew we should find him on duty."

"Hopkins! Hopkins!" exclaimed Mr Seymour, "I fear you have not taken the worthy vicar's friendly advice."

"Friendly advice!" muttered the wit: "too peremptory by half; he assumes the air of the *ace of trumps*, without its winning qualities, but in spite of his numerous *odd tricks*, I question whether in the end the *deuce* won't win him, and a *spade* put an end to his game. You see 'I speak *by the card*,' to save equivocation, as Shakspeare says;" and a *whiff—whiff*—from his pipe seasoned this impudent joke.

"Mr Hopkins," said the major, gravely, "on the eve of our impending festivities, I feel that by disregarding your coarse and most unjust attack upon a worthy and spotless character, I shall only act in the true spirit of my classical friend, the vicar; for Rome permitted her slaves to calumniate her best citizens in the day of triumph."

"Rome indeed! and pray," exclaimed Ned, "who might be those mighty fine Romans, about whom the vicar is so incessantly raving and chattering? Who?—but rude and inhospitable barbarians! Come now at once to the point, Major Snapwell, and tell me honestly, whether a cloud of smoke from the divine weed ever curled from a pipe in a Roman villa, or there was ever a generous outpouring of the brown flood from a Roman pitcher? Then, again, who was this Augustus, so lauded to the skies?—why, a poor fellow that actually had not a pane of glass in his window, nor even a shirt upon his back,* nor a pair of stockings to his shanks. I defy the vicar, with all his book learning and cloister scholarship, to gainsay this; though do not suppose that I value the judgment of these antiquaries beyond a pinch of the dust they venerate;—a fraternity of sallow, vinegar-visaged enthusiasts: the very tips of whose tart noses might gain a prize from the Society of Arts for taking out iron-moulds; who spurn a joke, as they would cuff a wasp, and love merriment pretty much as a certain personage is said to love holy water; who gain their inspiration, not from the free air of heaven, but from the murky atmosphere of vaults, while their literature is derived from the tablets of mouldering tombs, as they learn to spin their long yarns of mystery from the pattern-web of their friendly spider. Then only look at their high priest—I mean our vicar—does not his very dress shadow forth the gloom of his vocation? for what is it but the sable livery of the Middle Ages, turned up with mildew, and enlivened by coffin-nail buttons?"

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* Body linen was not known to the ancients; but frequent baths probably prevented the evils that might otherwise have arisen from the want of it.

"Upon my word, Mr Hopkins, you are playing a very pretty game of *Quintain*, and most heroically tilting at an image of your own grotesque creation. Have a care lest it should turn round, and, rebuffing your unskilful assault, bespatter you with dust far less honourable than that of the antiquary; but," continued the major, "do you not think that you would be much more worthily and profitably engaged in reforming your own habits than in misrepresenting and reviling those of your better-educated superiors? The vicar, as I well know, has spared no trouble to reclaim you, but sorry am I to say, with no other result than that of raising in your mind a storm of wrath which you most ungratefully shower upon a disinterested friend and a kind benefactor."

Ned Hopkins heeded not this reproof, but proceeded—"As to reforming my habits, why, gentlemen, the dog cannot alter its way of barking, nor is it easy to straighten in the oak the crook that grew in the sapling."

"I am to presume, then, to speak courteously, that you are still a man of leisure," observed Mr Seymour.

"Ay, verily am I; as idle, Sir, as a chimney in the dog-days," replied the wag of the tap-room.

"That, by the by, is not a very happy simile of yours, when applied to a man who is *smoking* all day long," interposed the major.

"If you are for a skirmish of *wit*, most gallant Sir, Ned Hopkins is not the lad to shirk the encounter. As, however, my simile of the *chimney* has failed to please you, let me try what I can make of the *dog-days*. I have it! 'As lazy as Ludlam's dog, that leaned his head against the wall to bark.' Will that please you? But, in good faith, gentlemen, I confess that a day of leisure is to me a golden age, for I am of my Lord Peterborough's way of thinking, who used to say, 'A golden age was that in which every one might *pipe* when and where he pleased.'" *Whiff—whiff.*

The wag, at this instant, gave such a practical illustration of his theme, as would have suffocated the major, had not his military habits rendered him smoke-proof.

"In short, gentlemen," resumed Ned, "a pipe is the solace of my life, and the mainspring of my wit: knock out my pipe and you knock out my brains. I have heard Porson say that 'when smoking went out of fashion, learning went out of school.' I verily believe that if I could not obtain the '*Furies' Frankincense*,' as King Jamie profanely called the divine weed, I should be like the vicar Breedon, who, according to William Lilly, cut the bell-ropes, and smoked them." So saying, he blew another cloud, and, removing the pipe from his mouth, sang the following ditty:—

"Little tube of magic power,
Charmer of an idle hour,
Object of my warm desire,
Lip of wax and eye of fire;
And thy snowy taper waist,
With my fingers gently braced," &c., &c.

"Always merry, Ned," said Mr Seymour.

"Lord bless you, Sir, what is life but a jest? I jest to live, and I live but to jest, and so I shall continue to do, until the shovel puts me to bed with my mother."

"Your father was, as I have heard, a reputed jester, so that your wit came to you by inheritance."

"Indeed he was, God bless his memory! and it was his constant prayer that his son Neddy might turn out as sharp a man as his father —a true 'chip of the old block;' and if there be any truth in the adage, that '*dogs bark as they are bred*,' I certainly had as good a chance as most persons. Momus rocked my cradle; I ate fire before I was seven years old; and so anxiously did my father superintend my education, that he never suffered me to cut a morsel until I had cut a joke. 'Neddy,' he used to say, 'I perceive you are like my bagpipes, never audible except your pouch is full of wind; for after a good meal you are as mum as a mouse in a mill; so remember, my lad, no pun no pudding—no song no supper.' Thus schooled I became, through necessity, a wit, and earned every mouthful by a joke; in short, after a little time, my genius illumined every dish, and, like the fire of London, blazed from Pudding-lane to Pie-corner."

"And you afterwards appeared on the stage as a candidate for popular applause; which, as you fortunately obtained, how came you to desert your calling?" asked the major.

"He who licks honey from thorns pays too dearly for it. The scanty pence were obtained only through painful toil and abject drudgery, so I left off thrashing straw, packed up my wardrobe in a pocket-handkerchief, and trudged off to Cockneyshire, where I hoped to find myself in clover."

"For what object?" inquired the major.

"To enter upon the literary line, and to carry my wit to a better market and to a more discerning public; and instead of retailing it at country fairs, to offer it wholesale to some of the fraternity of publishers, from whom I shortly received several profitable orders: the sale of my poetry, moreover, soon convinced me, notwithstanding all that had been said to the contrary, that there were still some gold mines in Parnassus. I assure you I lived the first week entirely 'upon liquid blacking,'* and sang like a lark as the herald of *Day*."

"Day and Martin," suggested the major.

"I also procured a blazing fire, and an abundant supply of candles, by the publication of my popular song, '*Ah, let my muse a flame inspire.*' I shall say nothing of my odes upon MOSES† and the PROFITS; except indeed that the one recruited my wardrobe, and the other my cupboard. In short, gentlemen, without exhausting your patience with a long recital of my adventures, suffice it to say, that I have always been able to keep my pipe smoking by my *puffs*, my pot boiling by the *ebullition* of my spirits, and my grate blazing by the *fire* of my genius; while paste and scissors have never failed in securing a plentiful supply of *cabbage*, upon which I have thriven like any caterpillar."

Here our Bacchanal, with an approving wink, piously inaugurated his potation by a wish that the "number of drops in his jug might be added to that of their days," in ratification of which he took a draught that Bitias,‡ or Diotimus,§ of classical memory, might well have envied.

"Did I not say," resumed the wag, after a deep-drawn breath, "that my pipe was the nurse of wit? ay, verily is she—a *dry*-nurse. It is a strange case, gentlemen, but I am in the situation of the flying-fish, incapable of keeping myself up, unless I occasionally moisten my wings."

"To be serious for a few moments, let me warn you," said Mr Seymour, "that if you persist in this dreadful habit, you will most assuredly destroy the coat of your stomach."

"The *coat* of my stomach!" replied Ned; "if that is all, my stomach must even be contented to do what its master has so often done before it—go in its waistcoat, with the understanding that it shall have an additional glass to keep it warm."

"But suppose I could prove to your satisfaction that by relinquish-ing this evil habit, your days in the land would be lengthened," observed Mr Seymour.

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* For the sake of some future antiquary, we may state that DAY and MARTIN were wholesale manufacturers of "*Liquid Blacking*," and that the former dedicated his immense gains to the founding almshouses for the blind.

† MOSES and SON, tailors, of advertising celebrity with a Poet Laureate attached to their establishment.

‡ Virg. Æn. i. 742.

§ An Athenian, nicknamed the *Funnel*, on account of the draughts he swallowed.

"My days lengthened by withdrawing that which alone enlivens them !—ha ! ha ! ha !—Why, my good Sir, I do not want an oracle to tell me that a short glass will always make a long day ; now, you must know that what with a shrunken purse, a lengthening score, and a forbidding tapstress, I was lately compelled to forgo the cheering cup for an entire long day, and I can promise you that I found it the longest day I had ever passed : nor was that the worst of it ; for, during this day of thirst and tribulation, I actually fancied that a grim demon had seized me, and clung as obstinately to my back, as ever the 'Old Man of the Sea' did upon the shoulders of 'Sinbad the Sailor,' and as I had neither grape nor gourd wherewith to exorcise him, methought I might smoke him from his hold ; but, alas ! the more I fumed the more did he fret and gripe me, nor was I relieved till the hostess, in pure charity, administered some drops of comfort."

"My good fellow," said the major, "all this is very intelligible ; for the want of your accustomed stimulant, you languished and fell into a fit of melancholy, just as Sinbad did from an overpowering sense of his helpless solitude."

Mr Seymour here remarked that the miserable feelings of the oppressed hypochondriac, and his vain struggles to overcome them, until aided by the fermented juice of the grape, were never more faithfully and vividly depicted than by the myth of "SINBAD AND THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA." *

"I see, however, very plainly," continued he, "that in regard to your inveterate habit of drinking you are incorrigible, and therefore, to quit the grievances of the bottle, what say you to an agreeable and profitable engagement?"

"Why, as to that, Sir, I have always a ready lip for a ripe cherry." —*Whiff.*

"You must know, then, that my friend Major Snapwell proposes to give a grand rural fête to the inhabitants of Overton and its neighbourhood ; and as he intends to convert his grounds into a fair upon the occasion, he is desirous of finding some person acquainted with comic entertainments, who would undertake the office of manager, to contract with the necessary performers, and superintend all the arrangements."

"I am the lad for the major's silver," said the delighted wag ; "for without vanity, I may say that few persons better understand the art of mixing up the motley ingredients of fun, farce, and frolic ; there is, besides, that in the major's face which I would willingly call master."

"And were I to judge from your frontispiece," observed the major,

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* This beautiful allegory of the Arabian Nights would furnish a highly-poetical theme for the pencil of the accomplished artist.

"I should say that every day in your calendar was a red-lettered one —the painting of that jolly red nose of yours must have cost a trifle."

"Cannot tell; it is not yet finished," retorted the humourist.

Major Snapwell, with the assistance of Mr Seymour, now entered more fully into the nature and extent of the various exhibitions which he wished Hopkins to provide; but, as he was at present unable to fix the exact day for the fête, he directed him to take such steps only as might be necessary for securing the performers, and to hold himself in readiness for the occasion."

"Readiness," observed Ned, "is the labour of time; he that will have a cake out of the wheat must tarry the grinding."

"Oh, depend upon it a reasonable time will be allowed for all due preparation; and so with that understanding we now part," concluded the major.

"Exactly so, most gallant Sir," responded the incorrigible wag; "we part, like a pair of scissors, to meet again, when you may depend upon it, I shall cut out the work according to the pattern you have given me."

CHAPTER XXII.

"Or shall I mention, where celestial Truth
Her awful light discloses, to bestow
A more majestic pomp on Beauty's frame?
. . . .
Nor ever yet
The melting rainbow's vernal-tinctured hues
To me have shown so pleasing, as when first
The hand of Science pointed out the path
In which the sunbeams gleaming from the west
Fall on the watery cloud." *Akenside.*

"Walk in—and view the wonders of my enchanted garden."—*Darwin.*

THE reader will remember that a promise had been given by Miss Villers to visit Osterley Park, in company with the Seymour family, in order that they might inspect and arrange the flower-garden of Major Snapwell. That promise had been redeemed; and on the morning following their arrival, the gallant host reminded Miss Villers of her engagement to offer such suggestions for the improvement of his flower-beds, as might readily occur to a person of her acknowledged taste.

"Nay, my dear major, rather appeal to our good friend Mr Seymour, since it is from his science alone, that you can expect any really useful hints for the more skilful disposition of your flowers," answered Miss Villers.

"I greatly fear," said Mr Seymour, "that you are raising expectations which I shall fail to realise; I will, therefore, at once, candidly state, that I have not the least pretension to be considered as a florist, and that my only object is to explain certain elementary principles regarding the harmony of colours, which may enable you, by their judicious application, to display your flowers to the eye of taste with the greatest amount of satisfaction. You will therefore perceive that I use the garden rather as the means than the end of an instructive inquiry—but before I proceed, let me acknowledge how greatly we are indebted to the late researches of M. Chevreul,* for the knowledge I shall hope to impart."

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* "On the Influence that two Colours may exercise upon each other, when seen simultaneously."—*Physical Investigations on Dyeing, by M. Chevreul.* More recently the same author has published a more extended work, entitled, *The Principles of Harmony, and Contrast of Colours, and their Applications to the Arts:* translated from the French by C. Martel.

"Previous to our entering upon this subject," interposed the vicar, "may I be allowed, my dear major, to congratulate you on having your flower-garden so close to your mansion: when so placed, it inspires very different feelings from one situated at a distance. In the former case, each flower is a *friend*, with whom you may hourly hold converse; you trace its growth from the opening bud to the falling blossom—you mark its daily wants, and the vase of water, or the pruning-knife and scissors, are at hand to supply them: should they be attacked by voracious insects, you drive the miscreants from their prey; whereas, in the distant garden, the flowers, instead of *friends*, are only *acquaintances*, casually seen, little cared for, and as soon forgotten, and into whose progress to maturity you have but an occasional, and very imperfect insight."

"So entirely do I agree with every word that has fallen from our friend the vicar, that I would earnestly entreat every true votary of our elegant science, to place the shrine of his goddess within a distance readily accessible from his dwelling," observed Mr Seymour.

"Do you not remember," asked Tom, "when we laid out our little gardens, how desirous you were that they should be placed at a short distance from the house, so that we might watch the progress of our flowers, and the effect produced upon them by daily attention?—and as long as I live I shall never forget the pleasure they so constantly gave us during the holidays."

The artlessness and truth with which this genuine feeling was expressed, particularly struck and pleased Miss Villers, and led her to remark that, with the exception perhaps of certain musical airs, nothing so tenaciously clings to the memory, or entwines itself so passionately around our affections, as an early love of flowers; that the violet and primrose, gathered in our childhood, carry with them the most endearing reminiscences, and the most pleasurable associations, to extreme old age. "The sojourner in distant lands," continued the young lady, "actually weeps with joy over the violet that may have casually found its way to the country of his adoption." *

Mr Seymour always considered the cultivation of a flower-garden as very properly included within the instructive recreations of youth.

"There cannot," said he, "be a more healthy and rational amusement. The contemplation of the softer beauties, which a beneficent Providence has so profusely lavished upon us, communicates a sympathetic influence, which not only educates the mind, but refines the heart, and leads the young scholar to look 'through Nature, up to

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* It is related that a vessel on arriving in Australia, and importing for the first time some primroses into the colony, produced such excitement amongst the English settlers, as to have rendered it necessary for the authorities to call out a guard to protect the desired treasure and it is recorded of Linnæus that, in his travels through England, he shed tears of joy on recognising the golden gorse of his native land.

Nature's God,' and thence to learn, that the Omnipotent who could design and delight in such marvels of beauty and loveliness, must be a gentle spirit, overflowing with kindness, and abounding in mercy; and not that stern and avenging deity imagined by the ignorant, and worshipped by the gloomy devotee.—The vigilance and kindly care, too, with which we watch, and provide for the tender plant during its progressive stages, furnish a wholesome discipline of the affections; while, at the same time, we are practically taught the great physical as well as moral truth, that the success of every enterprise will depend upon the due appliances of time and season. The opening foliage, bursting bud, and expanding flower become associated in the young mind with the cheering ideas of hope, progress, and fulfilment."

"I am unwilling to interrupt your flow of eloquence, so powerfully exerted for a high moral purpose," said the vicar; "but never let us forget to impress upon the young mind, that the gratification afforded by the contemplation of Nature must ever be commensurate with the knowledge of her laws and harmonies—that Science can call up beauties, and unfold charms, unknown and unperceived by the common observer—

'A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose is to him,
But it is nothing more.'"

"I can assure you," replied Mr Seymour, "that my chief object in the proposed examination of the major's flower-garden is to realise what you have so happily expressed, and which you will be pleased to remember I have advocated on many former occasions. It is my present intention to convince our young party that Science, relaxing her sterner aspect, may be found indulging her fancy in the flower-garden, and may even be caught by the young florist, in a kind of holiday humour, coquetting with the Muses, and sporting amidst its gaudy parterres."

"If I correctly understand Mr Seymour," observed the major, "he is prepared to point out the relations which subsist between certain colours, and the agreeable arrangement of flowers; but before we proceed," continued he, "I should much like to ask, whether those who have investigated the natural sources of the beautiful have not justly concluded in acknowledging *Contrast* as one of its most important conditions? and, if so, whether that principle should not be carried out in the arrangement and distribution of our flowers?"

Mr Seymour admitted, without any hesitation, that *Contrast* necessarily entered into all our conceptions of the beautiful; "for," said he, "without darkness, we should be scarcely conscious of the reality of light; and it is equally evident that, to render light charming to the senses, we must have shade as an accompanying contrast: even the rainbow owes much of its beauty to the dark cloud of rain, upon which its gorgeous colours appear in such striking opposition. And when does the clear blue sky ever appear so lovely and charming, as when viewed through the openings of shadowing trees?"

"Nothing can be more true, according to my views and experience," observed the vicar; "and let me ask, in my turn, wherein would be found the beauties of the most magnificent temples of Greece, if deprived of the happy alternation of lights and shadows? This idea was lately very forcibly impressed upon me, when, passing through the antique gallery of the British Museum, I viewed with delight the bold group of figures on the pediment of the Ægean Temple, and I could not but imagine how they must have successively unfolded fresh beauties to the spectator, as the light and shades changed with the passing hours of the day.—A circumstance to which our modern architects have paid far too little attention. And as to our Gothic edifices, I have always regarded their tracery, mouldings, and projecting ornaments as ingenious traps for catching lights and shadows."

"If so," exclaimed the major, "'may their shadows never be less,' for I am a devoted admirer of Gothic architecture."

"And I trust," said Louisa, "that the fairies may not run away with them, as they are said to do in New Zealand."*

"There can be no doubt," said Mr Seymour, "that the alternations of light and shade are always pleasing to the imagination, and indeed they constitute a striking feature of the beautiful."

"How vividly does this conversation recall to my recollection the delight I experienced, last summer, on the downs of Sussex, during a short residence at Eastbourne," said Miss Villers, "when, on a breezy day, masses of cloud were rapidly driven across the clear sky, and sunshine and shadow, like wild spirits, chased each other over hill and dale! The bright gleam, as it advanced, shed joy and gladness from its golden wings; while the broad shadow that followed in its train, although for the moment it might sober this feeling of exhilaration, served at the same time to heighten the expected pleasure of another bright alternation."

Mr Seymour told his fair companion that it was only under circumstances such as she had poetically described, that sunlight proclaims its undisputed dominion over our inward feelings: "It is then," said he, "that we yield to the impressions of Nature in one of her most pleasing moods, and discover those sympathetic relations which subsist between her external operations and our own internal sensations."

We think we may venture to say, that those who, perchance, have read this description by Miss Villers, will readily acknowledge that they have experienced the same feelings under similar circumstances.

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* Louisa Seymour here refers to the legend relating to the fairies of New Zealand, who, according to Sir George Grey, never appropriate any jewels that may have been offered for propitiating their favour, but are satisfied by carrying off their shadows.

"Am I then to understand, without further discussion, that the arrangement of our flowers is to be directed by the simple law of contrast of colours?" asked the major.

"Not exactly: there is another and a higher consideration to guide us—a principle depending upon *optical* laws; to explain and illustrate which I consider to be my special mission," answered Mr Seymour.

"*Nunc agite, pueri.* Now, boys, for a holiday frolic with Science in the flower-garden!" joyously shouted the vicar.

"Very good. You are certainly at liberty to give that turn to my expression," said Mr Seymour; "but you will soon perceive that the principles I am about to explain with reference to the arrangement of flowers, will admit of far more extensive and important applications, or I should have scarcely thought it worth while to enter upon their consideration. After this declaration, the major will probably allow me to proceed without further interruption. Well, then," continued Mr Seymour, "in the first place, let it be distinctly understood, that philosophers consider *white* light, as it emanates from the sun, as being compounded of, and consequently resolvable into, three *primary* colours, viz., RED, BLUE, and YELLOW; and that should such colours be recombined, in their just proportions, they will reproduce white light; and that moreover all other colours, such as *orange*, *green*, *indigo*, and *violet*, are compounds of the primaries just mentioned; thus, for instance, green is a compound of blue and yellow; orange, of red and yellow; and purple, of blue and red; and so on.

"When a body, therefore, exhibits a particular colour, we may assume that the white light, which has fallen upon its surface, has been resolved into its constituent colours; of which some have been absorbed or extinguished,* while others have been reflected—the reflected rays meeting the eye are, of course, those which impart to the body in question its characteristic colour: thus, if a body appear green, we infer that it has absorbed the red ray and reflected the blue and yellow ones, which, by combining, produce green. The difference of shade, or tone, observable in coloured bodies—such, for example, as a light or dark green, or a bright or dark red—arises from their respective surfaces reflecting, in conjunction with the dominant colour, other subordinate rays, with a greater or less admixture of white light that had escaped decomposition."

"I believe," interposed the vicar, "that a surface never exclusively reflects any single kind of coloured rays."

"I do not believe that there is such a thing as a perfectly unmixed colour, excepting, of course, those transmitted through the prism," answered Mr Seymour.

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* When we say that certain rays are *absorbed*, we use a figurative expression to denote that they have vanished, without reference to the mode of action by which the effect is produced.

"Well," observed the vicar, "I must now acknowledge the error into which I have fallen. You must know that, in anticipation of your lesson, I had prepared a top, which I thought, by spinning rapidly, would enable my young friends to comprehend more readily your theory. I divided its upper surface by radii into three compartments, corresponding to the relative areas occupied by the three primary colours; and I fully expected that, during the rapid revolution of the top, I should so combine these colours as to have produced a pure white; but instead of that, I only obtained a dull and dirty-greyish tint." *

"And I hope you now fully understand the cause of your disappointment," said Mr Seymour. "Could you have obtained colours as pure as those of the prism, you would, beyond doubt, have succeeded. In carrying out our theory, however, we are bound to consider the colours as pure, so that the union of any one with the other two shall produce white light. Now, the colours standing in such relations to each other are very significantly said to be COMPLEMENTARY of each other. Thus, red is complementary of green, that is, of blue and yellow, because to form white light, red must be added to such colours. So again, blue is said to be complementary of orange; although, in some of the more complicated colours, it is not always easy to fix upon their exact complements."†

Mr Seymour next proceeded to consider certain effects produced by white and coloured light upon human vision; and for this purpose he thought the readiest and most satisfactory way would be, at once, to exhibit a simple and, as he thought, a very instructive and convincing experiment. He accordingly attached to a white card three differently-coloured wafers, in the figure of a triangle; and stated that, if the eye be steadily fixed upon them for a few seconds, and then turned away and directed to a blank part of the card, the image of the wafers would be seen of the same form and dimensions, but in colours complementary of those of the real wafers.

"Do you mean to say," asked Tom, with some surprise, "that, after looking at the red wafer, I shall see its ghost of a green colour, by merely turning my eyes to a blank part of the paper?"

"Yes, my dear boy, that is precisely my meaning; but do not trust my word, let your eyes judge for themselves; only take care to keep the eye quite steady, for by the wavering motion of the eyeball, or the eyelids, the impression is lost."

"So then," said the vicar, "we must have the eyes of fish, or else

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* Every artist knows that a "*neutral tint*" is produced by an admixture of yellow, blue, and red.

† It is a great desideratum to obtain a better nomenclature of colours.

resemble the two gladiators of the Emperor Claudius, who were invincible from possessing the faculty of not winking."

Mr Seymour here asked the vicar whether he remembered reading in Moore's "Diary" an account of the little Irish fairies, which were said to stay as long as you looked at them, but were off the moment you looked away. "Surely," added Mr Seymour, "this is very like an optical illusion."

Tom obeyed his father's directions, and, in despite of the vicar's whimsicality, maintained a quiet eye and steady gaze, and readily saw the three wafers of different colours, but "more faint," as he said, "than the real ones. I see," said he, "the red wafer now green, the violet one yellow, and the orange one blue."

"I think we all now understand the meaning of a *complementary* colour; I shall, therefore, advance another step in the inquiry," said Mr Seymour. "The unreal, or *spectral* colour, you have just witnessed, and which is always complementary of that of the real image, when it is called up in the way you have seen, is said by M. Chevreul to be produced by SUCCESSIVE Contrast, to distinguish it from the optical appearance I am now about to exhibit, and which has been termed SIMULTANEOUS Contrast. The meaning and value of these words will immediately become apparent, for since in the late experiment the true and complementary colours were seen successively, or the one after the other; so, in the experiment I am about to exhibit, the true and spectral colours will be seen together: the terms, therefore, *successive* and *simultaneous* contrasts seem especially well calculated to mark the distinction. In this second experiment, I shall use the same card and the same wafers. Now then, Tom, I again ask you to gaze steadily upon the wafers, as you did before, but without transferring your eye to a blank part of the card, as in the former experiment, and tell me what you see."

"I see," answered the boy, after a short interval, "the three wafers, each bordered by a rim of a different colour; the red wafer has a border of green, the violet of yellow, and the orange one of blue."

The major having likewise satisfied himself by ocular demonstration, asked whether he was not to understand from what he had seen, that the eye, in viewing existing colours, sees also, either successively or simultaneously, phantoms of a complementary hue?

"You state the fact very clearly," answered Mr Seymour, "for those complementary images have no existence but in the mind's eye; they are mere spectres called up as it were by enchantment, but they are nevertheless very important in their practical influences; indeed I may say that they furnish the only rational explanation of many appearances which, although familiar, are not the less difficult to comprehend. This must be my apology for having so heavily taxed your time and patience; and all that now remains for me to do is, to announce the general optical law to be deduced from them, *viz.: That when two dissimilar colours are seen in juxtaposition, or when one quickly succeeds the other, they will mutually modify each other by reciprocally imparting their complementary colours.*"

"Are you prepared to give us some simple instance, in which so modified an effect can be readily witnessed?" asked the major.

"At once," answered Mr Seymour: "look at this bright-green coloured book, just purchased at a railroad station, where hundreds of such evergreens are exposed for sale, and tell me, if you can, the colour of its leaves."

"Pink," one and all exclaimed.

"No such thing," said Mr Seymour, "they are perfectly white, as you will acknowledge, as soon as I turn aside the green cover."

The party were perfectly astonished at this revelation, and amused themselves for some time by fixing their eyes upon the green cover, and then opening the book, in order to witness the complementary colour of its pages.

"I will relate a curious anecdote in connexion with this optical fallacy," said Mr Seymour: "being about to start on a railroad, I purchased at the terminus one of these green books to amuse myself during the journey, and on placing a shilling on the cover, I hastily withdrew it, under the impression that I had offered a copper counterfeit, but which immediately regained its silvery hue, as soon as it had been removed from the glare of the green-eyed enchanter. I will add to this another similar anecdote. As I lately passed a shop in the Quadrant, near Regent Street, I observed in the window numerous small articles of silver, displayed on a bright green card; after gazing upon them for a few seconds they appeared as if deeply tarnished, an effect which I soon discovered was due to the complementary colour cast upon them by the green ground on which they were exhibited."

"*Nimium ne crede colori,*" muttered the vicar.

"I plainly perceive," said the major, "that this optical theory must comprise many beautiful applications which I had not at first imagined."

"I could point out many such illustrations which, I doubt not, would greatly interest you; and here again I must be permitted to refer to an observation to which the vicar has frequently drawn our attention—the distinction between seeing and observing, between 'eyes and no eyes,' as Miss Edgeworth would express it. Should the philosopher travel through a country, a large portion of whose surface is covered by a vivid green, enlivened by a bright sun, and interspersed with patches of ploughed land, he will not fail to observe that the latter assume a purplish-red colour, while hundreds may have passed over the same road without having noticed, much less inquired into the cause of such an appearance."

"I can readily understand that there may be appearances to be alone recognised by an experienced and inquiring eye," observed the major.

"That is undoubtedly the case; and," added Mr Seymour, "so also are there optical illusions which the uneducated eye will take for realities—thus, many of those diversified tints, which so charm us in the summer sunset, are mere optical creations, being a few bright colours multiplied by the complementary images of our vision; and so also with those colours that occasionally flash across the restless surface of the sea; they are but complementary tints, which the blue or green waves cast upon the intervening spaces."*

"How all-important are these few observations, with which you have favoured us, to the landscape painter!" said Miss Villers.

"Not only to the painter, my dear Miss Villers, but to the connoisseur, for he will thereby not only be directed in the election of a suitable colour for the walls of his picture gallery, but he will be enabled to place his pictures in a juxtaposition the most favourable for eliciting their full effects."†

"Suppose we now, at once, adjourn to the flower-garden," said the vicar, "where our good friend will find an opportunity for practically exemplifying his principles."

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* Mr Albert Smith, in the account of his ascent to the summit of Mont Blanc, has furnished us with a striking illustration of that peculiar property of the eye to call up complementary colours. He says, that in marching along sloping fields and uplands, all of dazzling whiteness, he observed, for the first time, the intense blue colour of the sky; but this, as he supposed, was only the effect of comparison with the unsubdued glare from the snow on all sides; since, on making a kind of *lorgnette* with his two hands, and looking up, as he might have done at a picture, there was nothing unusual in the tint.

† Mr Sidney Smirke, in a letter to Sir Charles Eastlake, has lately refined this optical principle so far as to maintain, that the catalogues which we carry in our hands, during the inspection of pictures, should have leaves of different tints: a *neutral*-coloured page to sober the eye as it passes from a high to a low toned picture; and another of *bright red* to prepare the vision for distinguishing and discerning the greens in a landscape, however latent or neutralised they might be. Such artifice would also prevent the damaging action of pictures one on the other; so that, after viewing for a time a picture, by reverting to the appropriate page of our catalogue, we might, as it were, send the eye to a fountain to be cleansed from previous impressions, and rendered more tolerant of a new assortment of colours, and more critically alive to their differences. An eye fresh from Rubens could not appreciate a demure gray picture, but would unjustly set it down as a feeble and faded production. A sunset of Turner would thus be the death of a dozen tamer rivals. Reynolds himself tells us that the colour of Rubens appeared to him brighter on the first than on the second visit, and that when he came to think over the reason, he remembered that on the first visit he had a white note-book in his hand. It would be well were the trustees of the Fitzwilliam Gallery in Cambridge to attend to this precept in the arrangement of the pictures, and above all in selecting a suitable colour for the walls. "A Letter to Sir Charles Eastlake, P.R.A., Suggesting a mode of Assisting the Eye in the Right Perception of Colour in Pictures, by Sidney Smirke, A.R.A.'—(Privately printed since the seventh edition of Philosophy in Sport.)

This proposition was met by a general assent, and, at the suggestion of the major, the party retired into an alcove, which commanded a full view of the flower-beds, while it afforded an agreeable retreat from the direct rays of the sun.

"Major," said Mr Seymour, "I commend your taste in bringing together similar flowers in masses; but you should take care that the neighbouring clumps, as far as possible, occupy equal areas, and exhibit, as nearly as may be, complementary colours; although I will take this early opportunity to remark, that colours which, in the aggregate, are almost repulsive, may be tolerable, or even pleasing, when presented singly to the eye; for instance, masses of blue and green, unrelieved by other colours, are anything but agreeable when viewed in juxtaposition; and yet who will not hail with delight that little blue and bright flower, the '*Forget-me-not*,' though embosomed in a mass of green?"

"For the present," said the major, "let us confine our attention to the arrangement of clumps, or masses; each of which we will suppose to consist of different flowers, but in such proportions and proximity, as may conduce to a reciprocal modification of their colours; now, what I expect to obtain from your science is some general guiding principle for the arrangement and disposition of such groups."

"And that information I will endeavour to afford you. In the first place, then, take care that your plants are pretty nearly of equal magnitude, or they will resemble an awkward squad with tall and short recruits. Let it be, once for all too, remembered, that complementary colours are never incompatible with each other, their tone, and therefore their beauty, being mutually heightened by a reciprocal exchange of complements; not that I mean to assert that non-complementary colours are always unpleasing—I think, as a general rule, colours which possess a common element lose more or less of such element by juxtaposition."

"I understand your meaning: orange and green, each having yellow as a common element, would, I presume, furnish an example," said the major.

"Undoubtedly; and see what would happen—the orange would appear more red, and the green more blue; or, in other words, each would be deprived of a portion of its yellow," said Mr Seymour.

"That might be advantageous," suggested the major, "where the one was deficient in red, and the other in blue."

"Exactly so—and the circumstance of the same colour being liable to vary so widely in intensity and tone must render it difficult, if not impossible, to lay down any general rule that shall not have many exceptions: but then these exceptions will generally admit of explanation, and will serve to extend the field of observation, and to stimulate inquiry, and thus to afford additional sources of recreation; indeed, what many persons would regard as insuperable obstacles to anything like a systematic arrangement of coloured flowers, I am disposed to consider as affording the highest claims to our regard. In contemplating a group of flowers, the scientific observer will often experience an intuitive feeling of pleasure, or, it may be, an undefined impression of dissatisfaction; he will then proceed to examine into the harmonies which may explain the one, and to seek for the discords that may enable him to correct the other—this exercise of the mind constitutes the main pleasure of floral gardening, which never could be derived from a system under the dominion of defined and invariable laws."

"I think you just now stated that green and yellow are not well-assorted companions," observed the vicar; "if so, I should much like to ask you upon what principle it is that the green wood so greatly delights the eye on assuming the livery of autumn?"

"Therein you are deceived," answered Mr Seymour: "the green passing into yellow, red, or russet, is very far from displeasing. What is more charming than the *Virginia Creeper*, in its autumnal transitions, as seen around many of the cottages in our village? The autumnal tints really owe their beauty to their rich and almost endless variety; and I suspect, if it were possible to unweave their gorgeous texture, we should find that the assemblage was resolvable into groups of complementary colours. I think," continued Mr Seymour, "it must be admitted that colours bearing too close an analogy with each other, unless judiciously relieved, will suffer by juxtaposition. I am also disposed to think you will admit, that the different shades of the same colour disparage each other. Only look at yonder bed of *Dahlias*, and say whether they would not be much heightened in beauty by the intermixture of others of somewhat of a complementary character; and so it is with the golden *Jonquil*, when placed side by side with the pale *Narcissus*, the white light of the latter dimming the lustre of the former by its complementary sable, while the complementary green of the former imparts an injurious hue to the delicacy of the latter. Let me now, by way of further illustration, direct your attention to yonder *Roses:* those in the bed on the right have far too much yellow to please my eye; they almost assume a faded appearance; while those on the left are too much inclined to blue: now, I would propose, with the major's consent, to bring some strong yellow flowers in contact with the former, and some purple ones in contact with the latter, and I believe these defects would disappear."

"I do not think that your critical eye can find any fault with those blue flowers next to the orange ones," observed the vicar.

"No, indeed—nor with the violet contiguous to the yellow; they appear most cheerful in each other's company; in fact, there are few flowers in the garden in better accord with each other, unless you disturb their harmony by some unwelcome intrusion: but just look at that dull bed of green, near the yellow flowers; on the right of which, near the sun-dial, you will see a similar bed, but then it is in conjunction with a cluster of the vivid red *Verbena*, which lights it up, as it were, with a borrowed splendour, and at once redeems it from the sombre appearance which characterises the former one. You have another good instance of what may be called an ill-matched alliance in yonder beds of *Nasturtium* and *Purple Poppies*: instead of the natural lively scarlet, the former assumes a dull orange tint, in consequence of a greenish-orange complement cast upon them; while the latter, oppressed by the greenish-purple complement of the *Nasturtium*, exhibit a tint almost as dull as wine-lees."

"You have not yet said one word about white flowers," observed Miss Villers.

"True, madam—generally speaking, a clump of white flowers seen apart will produce but little effect; when, however, they are suitably distributed amongst those whose colours have been judiciously contrasted, they will occasion a favourable impression; as, for instance, when dispersed among red and pink flowers, surrounded by verdure, or amongst groups of blue and orange, and of violet and yellow flowers; you will readily perceive that their optical influence will have the effect of extinguishing any excessive or undue reflection of white rays emanating from the neighbouring bright flowers, and would thereby purify and heighten their tone. M. Chevreul also observes that white flowers are the only ones that possess the advantage of heightening the tone of those which have but a light tint of any colour. They have, moreover, the advantage of separating all such flowers as are mutually injured by discordant colours. White exalts all colours by raising their tone,* while black produces the very opposite effect."

Miss Villers here begged to ask a question respecting the influence of predominating green.

Mr Seymour replied "that the green leaves of flowers did not interfere to the extent generally supposed, since, as soon as the eye distinctly and simultaneously sees two colours in a rich flower-bed, the attention is so riveted upon them, that it passes without notice the contiguous objects which lie in a receding plane, and are of a sombre colour; besides which, it is a fact that green, in juxtaposition with a mass of bright yellow and blue, so nearly loses its colour as to be scarcely recognised, and will certainly not intrude with any optical impertinence."

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* A reviewer in the *Quarterly* has observed that the façade of the *Renaissance* Court in the Crystal Palace, owes its beauty to the preponderance of *white*, against which the tenderest colouring tells with a brilliancy otherwise unattainable. This was the secret spell of that extraordinary magician, Turner. White was his prevailing element, and every colour told with a magical intensity against it. In this also consists the secret charm of old-painted glass, in which white light will be found predominant. If an example be required, we can refer to the marvellous windows of King's College Chapel in Cambridge.

"After the valuable lesson we have received," said the major, "I think we shall be able to improve greatly the arrangement of my garden. You will be pleased, my dear Sir, to accept my best thanks —and what says Miss Villers?"

"That Madam Flora holds a most punctilious court; and expects her flaunting subjects to adopt their costume in strict accordance with the coloured dresses with which they may be brought into contact," answered the lady.

To whom Mr Seymour replied, "That Flora was not the only sovereign distinguished by such exactions."

"I understand your allusion," said Miss Villers: "you would intimate that the optical principles you have explained might admit of a wider range of application than that which comprehends the domain of Flora: that they might, for instance, suggest to my sex a more harmonious mixture in their coloured ribands and dresses."

"No doubt—Count Rumford long ago made a similar observation; but, strange to say, it has passed unheeded. I fully hope, however, that the exertions of the new 'School of Design,' aided by the admirable instructions of M. Chevreul, will introduce a purer taste as regards the harmony and disposition of colours, not only in dress, but in furniture, and every species of decoration—but what thinks the vicar?"

"That you have well performed the part of the Sibyl, and safely conducted us through Elysian fields, wherein you have introduced us to phantoms and spectral forms of the highest interest for our instruction, no less than for our amusement; and, as truth alone has been the object we have sought, it only remains for you to dismiss us safely through the appropriate portal."

"I quite understand your meaning," said Mr Seymour, "though artfully concealed under the shadow of the Muses' wing. You admit the truth of the optical theory I have expounded, but would, at the same time, caution us against the danger of being led by the fascinations of fancy to an exaggerated estimate of the importance of its applications; a caution which I can assure you I very sincerely appreciate."

CHAPTER XXIII.

TOM'S holidays were now drawing to a close, and the children were summoned into the library to receive their last lesson in philosophy.

"You have lately witnessed an experiment," said Mr Seymour, "which must have convinced you how liable the ear is to be deluded with respect to the nature and direction of sound; I shall now show you that the eye has also its sources of fallacy."

"If you proceed in this manner, you will make us Cartesians!"* exclaimed the vicar.

"I shall illustrate my subject by means of a new toy which I have lately invented," said Mr Seymour: "and unless I am much mistaken, it will afford as much amusement to the elder as to the younger members of our party, although the vicar may perhaps regard it as a more hostile instrument than even that of the wooden horse which filled unhappy Troy with an armed enemy. It is a small machine," continued Mr Seymour, "which is well calculated to furnish us with some capital puns and well-pointed epigrams."

"With puns!" exclaimed the horrified vicar, who no sooner heard this appalling declaration, than, like another Laocoon, he deprecated the introduction of the "*donum exitiale*" within the walls of Overton Lodge. But his hostility was soon disarmed, not by the circumvolutions of a snake around the body of the enraged orator, but by the embraces of little Rosa, who threw her arms around the neck of the vicar with such supplicating grace, that at length he exclaimed, "Well, well; if it be the decree of the Fates, I must submit."

During this altercation, Mr Seymour had procured the "wooden engine" from his study.

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* The Cartesians maintained that the senses were the great sources of deception; that everything with which they present us ought to be suspected as false, or at least dubious, until our reason has confirmed the report.

"I will first," said he, "exhibit the toy in its original state, and then show you the improvements which have been effected in it."

"Let us hear the account of its operation," said the major, "which I perceive is enclosed within the box."

"True," replied Mr Seymour; "and I think you will agree that I have given a very plausible explanation of its effects."

"Plausible," muttered the vicar, "plausible enough, no doubt; oh, the Sinon!"

Mr Seymour then proceeded. "This toy is termed the THAUMATROPE."

"Of Grecian origin!" observed the vicar. "'*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*,' as Virgil has it."

"What is the meaning of the term?" asked Louisa.

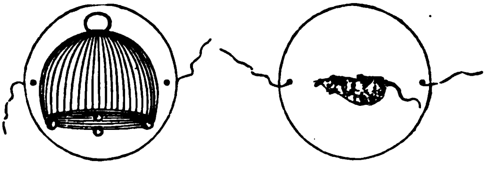
The vicar explained to her that it was compounded of the Greek words θαῦμα and τρέπω; the former of which signified *wonder;* the latter, *to turn.*

"Exactly," replied Mr Seymour: "'*a Wonder-turner*,' or a toy which performs wonders by turning round: but let me proceed in the explanation." He then continued to read as follows:—"This philosophical toy is founded upon the well-known optical principle, that an impression made on the retina of the eye lasts for a short interval after the object which produced it has been withdrawn. During the rapid whirling of the card, the figures on each of its sides are presented with such quick transition, that they both appear at the same instant, and thus occasion a very striking and magical effect. On each of these cards a device is introduced, with an appropriate motto or epigram; the point of which is answered, or explained, by the change which the figure assumes during the rapid whirling of the card."

"It may be very clever," said the vicar, "but I do not understand it."

"But you shortly will; look at one of the cards."

Mr Seymour then displayed a pasteboard circle, on one side of which was figured a rat, and on the other a cage: two strings were fastened in its axis, by which the card could easily be made to



revolve, by means of the thumb and finger. Fearing that some of our readers may be as dull of comprehension as the vicar, we have introduced a sketch of the apparatus, in which both sides of the card are exhibited, with the strings by which it is whirled round.

No sooner had Mr Seymour put the card in motion, than the vicar, in a tone of the greatest surprise, exclaimed, "Magic! magic! I declare the rat is in the cage!!"

"And what is the motto?" asked Louisa.

"Why is this rat like an opposition member in the House of Commons who joins the ministry?" replied Mr Seymour.

"Ha, ha, ha!—excellent!" cried the major, as he read the following answer: "Because, by *turning round* he gains a snug berth, but ceases to be free."

"The very reverse to what occurred in ancient Rome, where the slave became free by turning round," observed the vicar.

The vicar, no doubt, alluded to the custom of making a freeman, as described by Persius; from which it appears, that the clapping a cap * on the head, and giving him a turn on the heel, were necessary circumstances. A slave thus qualified became a citizen of Rome, and was honoured with a name more than belonging to any of his forefathers, which Persius has repeated with a great deal of humour in his fifth satire:—

> ". . . . Heu steriles veri, quibus una Quiritem
> Vertigo facit!"
> "That false enfranchisement with ease is found;
> Slaves are made citizens by turning round."
> DRYDEN.

"If we may trust the late report of the American Congress, your '*Thaumatrope*' has also found a political application on the other side of the Atlantic," observed the major; "for it would appear that the Honourable Member of Ohio told the Honourable Member of Carolina, whom he twitted with sudden tergiversation, that he reminded him of *the boy who turned round so fast, that the hinder parts of his dress were on both sides at once.*" †

Mr Seymour here sarcastically observed that "it was not necessary to travel beyond Palace Yard for an illustration equally, if not still more, appropriate."

"Show us another card," said Tom, eagerly.

"Here, then, is a watch-box; when I turn it round, you will see the watchman comfortably sleeping at his post."

"Very good! It is very surprising," said the vicar.

"Yes," observed the major; "and to carry on your political joke, it may be said that, like most worthies who gain a post by *turning round*, he sleeps over his duty."

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* Hence the *Cap* became the symbol of Liberty. The Athenian slave received a ring on his liberation.

† *Times*, March 2, 1852.

"The epigram which accompanies it is not deficient in point," said Mr Seymour.

> "The caprice of this watchman surpasses all bounds,
> He ne'er sits in his box, but when going his *rounds;*
> While he no sooner rests, 'tis a strange paradox!
> Than he flies from his post, and *turns* out of his box!"

"Here," said Mr Seymour, "we have a card, on which a rose-tree appears on the one side, and a garden-pot on the reverse; why does this tree resemble the *Tree of Liberty?* Spin it round, and you will receive the answer."

The major obeyed. "The tree," said he, "is in the garden-pot."

"And is therefore *planted by a revolution*," observed Mr Seymour.

The next card presented a laughing face, which, on being turned round, was instantly changed into a weeping one. The motto—*The sweetest things turn sour.*

"The device is capital!" exclaimed the vicar: "I question whether Peter of Cortona ever produced a more striking metamorphosis." *

The other cards were now exhibited in succession, of which the box contained eighteen, and the whole party, not even excepting the vicar, were highly gratified with the amusement.

"But I have not yet read to you the author's address to the public; and which, I must say, contains a succession of very happy puns."

"Spare me! spare me!" cried the vicar; "I like your toy, but cannot discover the advantage of alloying amusement with such spurious wit, and of associating science with buffoonery."

Mr Seymour, however, was relentless, and thus proceeded: "It is well known that the Laputan philosopher invented a piece of machinery, by which works could be composed by a mechanical operation: and the *Quarterly Review* has asserted, that a certain English poem was fabricated in Paris by the powers of a steam-engine; but the author of the present invention claims for himself the exclusive merit of having first constructed a hand-mill, by which puns and epigrams may be *turned* with as much ease as tunes are played on the hand-organ, and old jokes so *rounded* and changed, as to assume all the airs of originality. The inventor confidently anticipates the favour and patronage of an enlightened and liberal public, on the well-grounded assurance, that '*one good turn* deserves another;' and he trusts that his discovery may afford the happy means of giving activity to wit that has been long *stationary;* of *revolutionising* the present system of *standing* jokes, and of putting into *rapid circulation* the most approved bon-mots."

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* Ferdinand, Duke of Tuscany, was once struck with the picture of a child crying; the artist (Peter of Cortona), who was at work upon the head, wishing to give a proof of his skill, by a few judicious touches converted the crying into a laughing face. The duke was in astonishment; the painter, to show himself master of the human countenance, restored his first touches, and the duke again saw the child weeping.

"Why, vicar, what ails thee?" exclaimed the major.

"Our subject has given him a *turn;* let him alone and he will soon *come round*," observed Mr Seymour.

The whole party, with the exception of Mr Twaddleton, laughed heartily: the vicar, however, did not relax a feature of his countenance; nor would he "though Nestor swear the jest be laughable."*

The major here expressed his surprise at the vicar's unrelenting and pertinacious hostility to a pun; "Surely," observed he, "as a classic, you need not be reminded that Cicero was one of the most inveterate forensic punsters of his age,† and that Horace never disdained to play upon the double meaning of a word."

"Yes," whispered Mr Seymour, "but they were in the Latin language."

"I hope the quibbles of the Advocate are not to be accepted as the rule of refined taste," hastily responded the vicar.

As soon as this ebullition had subsided, the major, in order to divert the conversation from so turbulent a channel, inquired of Mr Seymour, what was the nature of the improvement to which he had alluded.

"My proposed improvements refer both to the subjects exhibited on the cards, and to the mechanism by which their changes are effected," replied Mr Seymour. "In the first place, it has occurred to me that this amusing toy might be made instrumental in impressing classical subjects upon the memory of young persons."

This observation delighted the vicar, who said that he would patronise such an attempt with all his heart.

"Why can we not," continued he, "thus represent the Metamorphoses of Ovid? or what say you, vicar, to converting the fleet of Æneas into sea-nymphs, as Virgil has it?"

"An elegant thought! upon my word; a most elegant conception!" exclaimed Mr Twaddleton.

"What have we here?" interrupted the major, who had, for the first time, noticed the superscription on the cover of the box. "Had I seen this before, I should have augured favourably of the toy: it is like the sign of an inn, which is held out to announce good entertainment within." He then read the following:—

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* Shakspeare.

† To the son of a tailor, who had assumed the office of legislator, Cicero said, "*Rem acu* tetigisti;" and to the son of a cook, "Ego *quoque* tibi *jure* favebo." To understand this latter pun, the reader must be told that the ancients pronounced *coce* and *coque* like *co-ke;* and that *jure* may signify either *broth* or *law*. To a Jew who wished to get the cause of Verres from Cicero into his own hands, he asked what a Jew could have to do with (*verres*) swine's flesh? The Romans gave to a boar-pig the appellation of *verres*.—*D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature.*

The Thaumatrope;
being
Rounds of Amusement,
or
How to please and surprise
By *Turns.*

Mr Seymour now proceeded to explain more fully the optical theory of the instrument, which neither Louisa nor Tom could, as yet, thoroughly understand.

He told them that an object was seen by the eye in consequence of its image being delineated on the retina, or optic nerve, which is situated on the back part of the eye; and that it had been ascertained, by experiment, that the impression which the mind thus receives lasts for about the eighth part of a second after the image is removed. "It is, therefore, sufficiently evident," said Mr Seymour. "that if any point, as a lighted stick, be made to revolve, so as to complete the circle in that period, we shall not see a fiery point, but a fiery circle; because the impression made by it in every point of its circuit will remain until it comes round again to the spot from which it set out;—but we will at once exemplify this fact by an experiment."

Tom was accordingly directed to procure a piece of stick and a candle; and as soon as they were brought into the room, Mr Seymour ignited the end of the stick and whirled it round, when a bright circle, without any intervals of darkness, was seen by the whole party.

"Never until this instant," exclaimed the vicar, with an expression of high satisfaction, "did I fully appreciate the beauty of that passage in Milton, wherein the poet evidently describes the rapidity of Satan's flight, as well as the refulgence of his appearance—

'Sprung upward like a pyramid of fire.'

Now, to take in the full meaning of this figure," continued Mr Twaddleton, "we must imagine ourselves in chaos, and that a vast luminous body is rising near the spot where we may be supposed to be standing, so swiftly as to appear a continued track of light, and lessening to the view, according to the increase of distance, until it ends in a point and then disappears; and all this must be supposed to strike our eye at one instant."

"It is very probable," said Mr Seymour, "that the poet had such an idea in view, and that he intended by it to convey the immense rapidity of Satan's flight. Homer makes use of the same figure to express the velocity of the javelin, *δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος*, '*long-shadowed*' javelin. We shall have ample proof of the effect of this power in the eye of retaining impressions, and of thus converting points into lines and circles, during the exhibition of your fireworks; and which, in fact, derive the greater part of their magical effect from it."

"The pin-wheel is certainly nothing more than a fiery circle produced by the rapid revolution of a jet of flame," said the vicar.

"And the rocket," added Mr Seymour, "is a column of light occasioned by the same rapid movement of a burning body in a rectilinear or curved direction."

"I perfectly understand all that you have said," observed Tom.

"Then you will not have any difficulty in explaining the action of the Thaumatrope, for it depends upon the same optical principle; the impression made on the retina by the image, which is delineated on one side of the card, is not erased before that which is painted on the opposite side is presented to the eye; and the consequence is that you see both sides at once."

"Or, you might put it in this way," said the major: "that as the image remains the eighth of a second on the retina, a revolution of eight times in a second will secure its uninterrupted continuance."

"On turning round the card," observed Louisa, "I perceive that every part of the figure is not equally distinct."

"Because every part of the card does not revolve with the same velocity," said her father; "and this fact offers a good illustration of what I formerly stated,* that in circular motion, the parts more remote from the axis of rotation are those which move with the greater velocity. This toy will also be found capable of exemplifying another truth to which I have before alluded, that 'the axis of motion remains at rest while all the parts revolve around it.'" †

"I remember that very well," exclaimed Tom.

"Then take the card and spin it between yourself and the window, and tell me what you observe," said his father.

"I see a dark line across the window; and, what is very strange, the other parts of the card appear transparent; for they do not obstruct the view of the window, as they would if the card were at rest."

"The dark line you see is the axis of rotation, which, being stationary, necessarily excludes the light; the other parts being in motion do not remain a sufficient time to obliterate the image made on the eye by the window. It is true that the card-disc passes between your eye and the light, but, as it does not continue at any one point for more than the eighth of a second, there is no more apparent intermission of the light than what occurs during the winking of the eyes."

"You allude to a very curious fact," observed the vicar, "that, although we are perpetually covering the eyeballs with our eyelids, we are not conscious of the intervals of darkness."

"The reason of which must surely be obvious from the explanation

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* Page 121.

† Page 38.

I have just offered," said Mr Seymour: "the sensation of light is not exchanged for that of darkness in so short a period as the twinkling of the eye. Before we quit the subject," continued Mr Seymour, "let me point out the great importance of this law of vision. Suppose the image on the retina had vanished at the same time with the withdrawal of the object; we should, in that case, have been unable to see the things immediately around us in due connexion with each other; the objects must have appeared isolated, in detached parts, by means of separate impressions, which the eye would be unable to combine into a whole, unless indeed they came to us at a very acute angle."

"I admit the plausibility of your theory," said the vicar; "but it appears to me that objects frequently linger on the sight for a longer period than that which you assign to them. I well remember seeing the flame of a candle for several seconds after it had been suddenly withdrawn from the apartment."

"I admit that strong lights frequently continue for some time thus visible in the 'mind's eye;' and it is well known that such impressions are often followed by images of similar shape, successively assuming different colours. In passing from sunshine to a dark room, we also frequently witness the appearance of stars and circles of varicoloured light; but these '*ocular spectra*' are very different from the phenomena of the Thaumatrope, and are to be explained upon very different principles."

"There is also another optical appearance which the knowledge you acquired in the flower-garden at Osterley Park will enable you fully to understand—I allude to the spectral images which become visible after intently gazing upon a coloured object, and which, you will remember, upon the principle of '*Successive Contrast*,'* are always of a *complementary* colour."

"I know exactly to what you allude," said the major; "and I do not doubt but that many of those illusive appearances which have been described might be referred to the operation of the same natural cause. It is easy to imagine that a person who has steadfastly fixed his eyes upon an illuminated object may for some minutes afterwards see the same figure of a dark hue; it may have been from such a cause that Constantine saw the image of a cross in the sky. You are probably acquainted with the opinions of Eusebius, Fabricius, and Dr Lardner, upon this alleged miracle."

"Yes," added the vicar, "and I also know that this imputed miracle for the conversion of Constantine gave origin to the Catholic custom of illuminating the cross of St Peter's in Rome."

"Sir David Brewster, in his work on Natural Magic, has given us a beautiful illustration of the same principle; it is as follows," said

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* See Chapter xxii., p. 271.

Mr Seymour. "A figure, dressed in *black*, and mounted upon a *white* horse, was riding along, exposed to the bright rays of the sun, which, through a small opening in the clouds, was throwing its light only upon that part of the landscape. The *black* figure was projected against a white cloud, and the white horse shone with particular brilliancy by its contrast with the dark soil against which it was seen. A person interested in the arrival of such a stranger had been for some time following his movements with intense anxiety; but, upon his disappearance behind a wood, was surprised to observe the spectre of the mounted stranger in the form of a *white* rider upon a black steed, and this spectre was seen for some time in the sky, or upon any pale ground to which the eye was directed."

Miss Villers here remarked that "she had a distant recollection of a somewhat similar appearance having been recorded by Goethe." *

Mr Seymour added, that "from the same cause a devotee before an image might see its spectral form whichever way he turned his eyes; or he might see a luminous border around the head of the saint." (*Nimbus.*) †

"That I can readily believe," observed the major: "in the former case the appearance would arise from *Successive*, in the latter from *Simultaneous*, contrast.—It is gratifying to observe to what an extensive range of subjects this apparently trivial fact is applicable."

"But let us return to the subject of the Thaumatrope," said Mr Seymour.

"Behold!" continued he, "the Trojan ships!"

"Ay, ay, sure enough," said the vicar; "but let me see, are their forms according to ancient authority? Very well indeed, Mr Seymour; very well: the poops have the bend so accurately described by Ovid and Virgil—'*puppesque recurvæ,*' as the poet has it. And there is the triton; but is its size in proportion to the vessel? Yes, Sir, your are doubtless correct, the figure is generally represented of considerable magnitude on ancient medals; and Silius Italicus, if my memory serves me, alludes to the weight of the image having on some occasions contributed to the wreck of the vessel."

"Spin them round," said Mr Seymour.

The vicar complied; exclaiming at the same moment, "'*Vo site*

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* The appearance referred to is thus described by Goethe, in his work on colours:—"As it was growing twilight, a black poodle ran by my window in the street, and drew a clear shining appearance after him; the undefined image of his passing form *remaining in the eye.*" According to his own acknowledgment this optical illusion had suggested the introduction of the black dog in his poem of Faust, in which it is described "as ranging through the corn and stubble, with a line of fire following upon his track."

† "Illa lux divinam verticem claro orbe complectens."

solutæ. Ite deæ pelagi.' They are positively converted into sea-nymphs. '*Mirabile monstrum!*'" cried Mr Twaddleton.

"Here is another classical device: the representation of Eurydice as she fell lifeless at the moment Orpheus turned round to gaze on her," said Mr Seymour.

"Charming! charming! I perceive that it is a copy from the splendid print of Didot in the Paris edition of Virgil."

"Turn it round, vicar."

"See! see! she revives, she opens her eyes, and throws her arms around the neck of her frantic lover. Truly, Mr Seymour, this is a most interesting toy," said Mr Twaddleton.

Mr Seymour here observed that he had written an epigram to accompany the subject they had just witnessed, and he trusted that he had given to it a classical *turn.*

"By all means read it; the subject admits of much classical decoration," observed the vicar.

Louisa received the epigram from the hands of her father, and read as follows:—

"By *turning round*, 'tis said, that Orpheus lost his wife;
Let him *turn round* again, and she 'll *return* to life."

It could not be expected that Mr Twaddleton should have admired lines so burdened with puns; but he quietly observed, "I should have preferred a quotation from the fourth Georgic, so beautifully descriptive of the fable."

The next card that was presented for inspection exhibited the metamorphosis of Daphne into a laurel. As the figure revolved, the leaves were seen sprouting from her fingers, and her arms lengthening into branches.

"Come now," said Mr Seymour, "let us exhibit the figure which has been designed at my request: the change which it will undergo during its revolution may, I trust, on some day be realised; I only regret that it is not in my power to give the vicar so good a *turn.*"

"Really, if, like Crambe in Martinus Scriblerus, thou hadst a word for every day in the year, I should certainly say that you were this day under the dominion of the word *turn.*"

"You know this resemblance," said Mr Seymour, as he shewed the figure painted on one side of the card to his daughter.

"It is the vicar!" exclaimed Louisa.

It was, indeed, a portrait of that most excellent character, represented in the costume in which he usually appeared.

"Turn it round," said Mr Seymour.

Louisa twirled the cord, and the effect of the rotation was to convert the humble vicar into the dignified bishop; his meagre form was instantly changed into a corpulent figure, which was still further inflated by the addition of the episcopal robes and lawn sleeves, while his angular features were softened by the graceful curves of an immense wig.

"I will give you a motto for it," said the major, "and may it be prophetic!—RAPID PREFERMENT."

"I will now show you the improvement which has been effected in the construction and use of this toy," said Mr Seymour. "It consists in altering the axis of rotation while the card is in the act of revolving, in order that the images on its opposite sides may be brought into different positions with respect to each other."

"There cannot be any doubt that such would be the effect, were it possible to change the axis in the way you propose: but how is this to be effected?" asked the vicar.

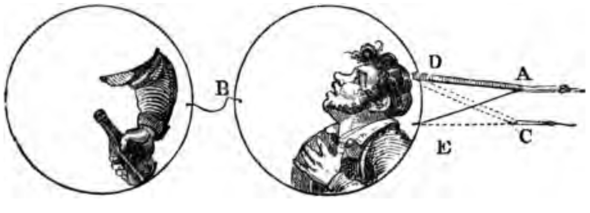
"At first I attempted to produce the change by the addition of several other strings; but I soon found that, in order to avail myself of this expedient, I should be obliged to stop the card before I could alter the axis; whereas my great object, as I have just stated, was to produce the change while the card was in the act of spinning," answered Mr Seymour.

"And I shrewdly suspect that such must necessarily be the case, adopt whatever expedient you may," observed the major.

"No, indeed; I have at length succeeded to my entire satisfaction, and that, too, by a most simple scheme, after having tried, without success, many very complicated contrivances."

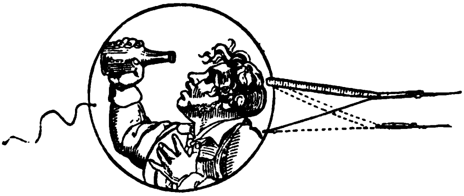
The party were very desirous of witnessing this triumph of skill, and Mr Seymour produced the card with its appendages, of which we shall here present our readers with an engraving:—

Fig. 1.

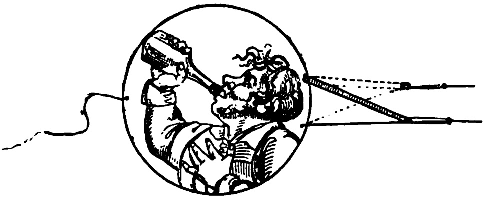


In all respects the card is constructed like the common Thaumatrope; the subject, it will be perceived, is that of a man drinking, the bottle being placed on one side, and the head on the other; upon revolving the card, in the ordinary manner, the two images will appear together, as represented in

Fig. 2.



The improvement consists in inserting in one, or if a still greater change be desired, in both sides of the card, two strings, as seen in fig. 1—viz., A D and A E, which, united at A, form a common string for twirling the card. The cord, A D, is elastic, while the string, A E, is incapable of being stretched. If, therefore, while the card is in the act of spinning, the cord, A D, be pulled with an increased force, it will take the position, D C, while the inelastic string, A E, will at the same time assume that of E C. The consequence of which will be that, instead of the card spinning on the axis in the direction A B, it will now spin on that which is in the direction C B, and we shall, accordingly, see the images on the opposite sides of the card in different positions with respect to each other; at one moment the bottle will be seen in the hand of the drinker, as represented in fig. 2, and in the next at his mouth, as shown in the cut below:—



while, by alternately tightening and relaxing the string, the figure will be seen in the very act of raising and lowering the bottle.

Mr Seymour, having explained the principle of his improvement, as we have above related, proceeded to exemplify it by a series of different subjects. We shall select two or three of them for the sake of illustration. A card, with a jockey on one side and a horse on the other, on spinning round presented the combined figure; upon tightening the string, in the manner we have described, the card changed its axis, without the slightest halt or hesitation in its rotation, and the rider was in an instant canted over the head of his charger; in a moment, however, he appeared remounted; after which, by pulling the string with different degrees of force, he was made to stand on the saddle, and to exhibit a number of different movements.

The figure of an Indian juggler was represented in the act of throwing up *two* balls; on spinning the card, and at the same time altering the position of the circle, in the manner already described, *three*, and afterwards *four*, became visible. When the card revolved upon its original axis, two of the balls on the reverse side coincided with the two painted on the front, so that during the revolution they fell upon the same spot on the retina, and therefore produced a single impression; but as soon as the position of the card was changed, these spots were brought upon different points, and consequently produced separate and independent images. By alternately tightening and relaxing the strings, the balls were seen in motion, arising from and falling into the hand of the juggler.

The next subject which we shall describe produced a considerable degree of merriment. The vicar inspected the drawing, and observed that he saw a pulpit placed on the banks of a pond; the card was made to spin, when a tailor was seen haranguing from the former, and a goose, at the same instant, fluttering over the water. The circle was now suddenly shifted, and the vicar was desired to state what he saw:—"Why, bless me!" exclaimed Mr Twaddleton, "the tailor is justly served; he is ducked in the pond, while the goose has taken his place in the pulpit."

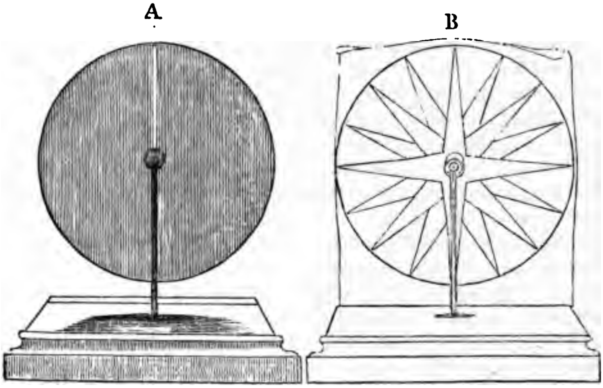
Fearing that we may have exhausted the patience of our reader, we shall only relate one more example. It was a Turk, who, by means of the expedient we are illustrating, was made to draw his sabre, and cut off the head of his antagonist, which immediately fell into the hands of the decapitated person, who, like St Denys, appeared as if walking off with perfect indifference.

"You must admit that these effects are no less novel than they are extraordinary, and that they are capable of almost endless variation," said Mr Seymour.

"I admit it all," replied Mr Twaddleton, "and I have only to express a hope that, amidst all your improvements, you will never lose sight of your promised and most laudable design, that of rendering your toy subservient to classical illustration: your triumph will then be complete, and I shall willingly acknowledge that there is not only philosophy but literature in your sport."

"I must not quit this subject," said Mr Seymour, "until I have exhibited another toy, which, like the Thaumatrope, is indebted for its effect to the optical principle, which I trust is now well understood by all present, viz., that *an impression made on the retina lasts for a certain period after the object itself has been withdrawn.*"

The annexed woodcut represents the instrument to which Mr Seymour alluded.



It consists of a disc of blackened tin plate, which is made to revolve on its axis in the manner above exhibited. A narrow opening extends from the circumference to the centre as seen at A. If a device of any kind, as a star (which for increasing the beauty of the experiment ought to be transparent and illuminated with a lamp), be placed behind the disc, it is evident that, as long as the circle remains at rest, no other part of the figure can be visible than that which is immediately behind the slit A, but the instant it is put into rapid motion the whole of the star will be seen, as exhibited in figure B.

Mr Seymour observed that the explanation of the phenomenon was obvious — each successive portion of the figure seen through the opening remains on the eye until the circle has completed its entire revolution.

"This experiment," continued Mr Seymour, "admits of a very curious modification, which I shall now proceed to exhibit."

Three coloured wafers were then placed, at equal distances from each other, on the disc, and the instrument having been arranged before a looking-glass, the party were desired to observe the reflected image as the circle revolved.

"The wafers are blended into one continuous zone," observed Mr Seymour.

"To be sure," said Louisa; "upon the same principle that the ignited stick appears as a fiery circle."

"It would be very strange, after the different experiments we have seen, if we were not able to explain the present appearance," observed Tom.

"The fiery circle produced by the revolving stick is a much better illustration of the principle; I do not see what object Mr Seymour has in thus multiplying his experiments," said the vicar.

"Gently, if you please, Mr Twaddleton, and, before you favour us with your criticism, wait until I have concluded my experiment. You have seen that the reflected image of the revolving wafers appears as a continuous zone, and you have very correctly explained the reason of such an appearance; but I must now request you to inspect the reflected image through the slit in the disc, as it revolves, and say what new effect you observe."

"How very strange!" exclaimed Tom; "I see the three wafers very distinctly, and perfectly at rest."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the vicar; "let me have a peep. Why, I declare they appear, as you say, stationary, although I know them to be in rapid motion: as sure as fate I shall become a Cartesian."

The major, Louisa, and Mrs Seymour were all equally surprised, and incapable of giving any explanation of the phenomenon they witnessed.

"Let us remember," said Mr Seymour, "that, in viewing the image through the slit in the revolving disc, we catch but a momentary glance as it passes before the eye, and that the image thus produced on the retina is retained until the next revolution again brings the slit into the same position. Now it is evident that, before the eye can ascertain a body to be in motion, it must observe it in two successive portions of time, in order to compare its change of place;* but in the experiment under consideration, the glance is momentary, the wafer is no sooner seen than it passes away; its figure alone is impressed upon the retina, and this impression is continued without any change, until the circle completes its round, and consequently the image must appear at rest."

"I understand you; the figure, but not the motion, of the wafer, is discernible in the short period during which it is visible through the slit," observed the vicar.

"I lately witnessed a beautiful illustration of this subject at the Royal Institution," said Mr Seymour. "A number of cogged wheels, cut out of pasteboard, were set in motion in a perfectly dark room, when occasional flashes of light from an electric battery displayed their forms most distinctly, and yet, although whirling round at the time, they appeared to the spectator as motionless as so many solid blocks of marble.* In like manner, in a storm, during the darkness of midnight, the rolling ship and waves, when rendered visible by flashes of lightning, will appear as completely at rest as a representation of them upon the canvas. So again, in viewing a fountain in full play, the eye sees only a clouded mist issuing from the jet; but, if in the dark we cause a succession of electric sparks to follow each other at short intervals of time, we shall at once perceive that this cloud consists of distinct drops of water. These successive drops, when seen in one continued light, follow each other so quickly, that the eye receives new impressions before the previous ones are extinguished, and hence a mass of confusion; whereas, in the instantaneous light which is shed by electricity, each impression stamps its image before the succeeding one can interfere with it, and a pause is afforded for the exercise of distinct sensation. I may at some future time extend this interesting subject by exhibiting some optical illusions produced by the revolution of wheels in different directions and at different velocities, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to Mr Faraday; † and, in mentioning that distinguished philosopher," added Mr Seymour, addressing himself more particularly to the vicar, "I cannot avoid remarking, that if *Philosophy in Sport* can be made *Science in Earnest*, the juvenile lectures delivered by that professor have established the converse proposition, that the sternness of Science may be relaxed into the engaging aspect of Sport.

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* "Our knowledge of motion is a deduction of reasoning, not a perception of sense; it is derived from the comparison of two positions; the idea of a change of place is the result of that comparison attained by a short process of reasoning."—*Lord Brougham.*

"Before quitting this subject," continued he, "I have yet another toy in store for your amusement; ‡ it is founded upon the optical principle which I have every reason to believe you now thoroughly understand." A square box was then produced, containing a number of card-discs, the edges of which exhibited a series of notches corresponding with the figures delineated on their margins. That the reader may better understand their construction, as well as the explanation of Mr Seymour, the following representation has been introduced.

"To exhibit the magical effects of this toy," said Mr Seymour, "I will, by means of the spindle to which it is attached, cause it to revolve rapidly before the looking-glass, and you shall view the reflection through the openings."

Each member of the party obeyed in succession the direction thus given, and severally expressed the great astonishment they felt at observing the figures in constant motion, and exhibiting the most grotesque attitudes.

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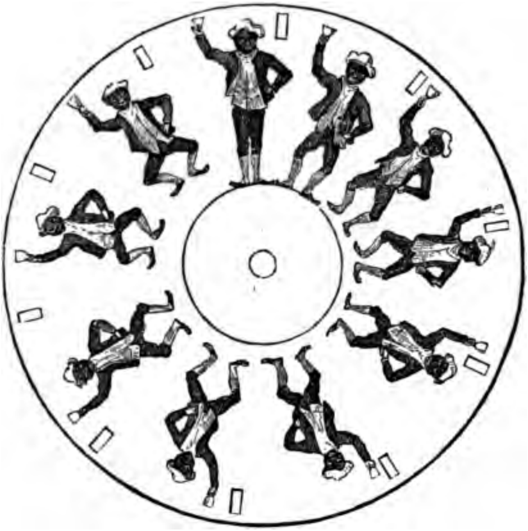
* Since the last edition of this work, Mr Talbot has very ingeniously availed himself of the phenomenon for obtaining instantaneous photographic images of bodies in rapid motion.

† See Journal of the Royal Institution, No. 2.

‡ This toy appeared subsequent to the Thaumatrope, and was probably suggested by it.

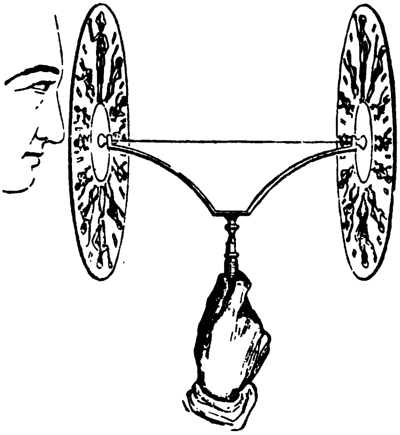
"Now," said Mr Seymour, "attend to my explanation. Each figure is seen through the aperture, and as it passes and is succeeded in rapid succession by another and another, differing from the former only in attitude, the eye is cheated into the belief of its being the same object successively changing the position of its body. Consider what takes place in an image on the retina when we actually witness a man in motion; for instance, a man jumping over a gate: in the first moment he appears on the ground, in the next his legs are a few inches above it, in the third they are nearly on a level with the rail, in the fourth he is above it, and then in the successive moments he is seen descending as he had previously risen. A precisely similar effect is produced on the retina by the successive substitution of figures in corresponding attitudes, as seen through the orifices of the revolving disc; each figure remaining on the retina long enough to allow its successor to take its place without an interval that would destroy the illusion."



"Nothing can be more satisfactory than your explanation of this very extraordinary toy," observed the vicar.

"I am now about to exhibit what I consider a great improvement in its construction, inasmuch as we thus get rid of the mirror, and enable two persons to witness the deception at the same time," said

Mr Seymour. "For this purpose I have a spindle, at each end of which a disc is placed, and which I hold in my hand." We deem it expedient to illustrate this arrangement by a woodcut.



"By revolving the spindle, you perceive that both cards are made to turn round with equal velocity. Tom," said his father, "look through the orifices of the disc on my right hand, and, Louisa, do the same on my left." The children obeyed, and simultaneously expressed their wonder at what they witnessed. "The figures are all dancing!" cried Tom. "The horses are all prancing!" exclaimed Louisa.

"You have not yet told us the name of this toy," observed the vicar.

"It has received several names," answered Mr Seymour, "as *Phantasmascope*, *Phænakistiscope*, &c., derived, as you no doubt perceive, from the Greek." It is scarcely necessary to observe that the appearances thus produced may be infinitely varied: heads opening their mouths, and distorting their countenances; creeping serpents, and machinery in active operation, are amongst the subjects that have excited the greatest admiration.

Louisa here observed, that she had lately seen a most extraordinary optical illusion, termed "*Fluttering Hearts*."

"You allude to the figures, worked in worsted, on a ground of a complementary colour," said her father.

"To be sure; and by moving about the table before the subdued light of a lamp or candle, the figures in question will appear as if in motion, and quite free, and disconnected with the ground upon which they are depicted," answered Louisa.

"I am glad you have directed your attention to an appearance which has much puzzled wiser heads than our own," observed Mr Seymour.

"I also have heard that some difference of opinion exists as to the exact cause of this illusion," said Miss Villers, "and have prepared a specimen for your use, not worked in worsted, but painted on card; and I have, moreover, given to it the convenient form of a hand-screen, which I now place at your disposal."

"Many thanks, my dear Miss Villers."

Mr Seymour, in the evening of the day, drew his family party around him, and by the aid of a candle was enabled to exhibit the extraordinary appearance above related.

"Now," said he, "in order to arrive at some satisfactory explanation of this appearance, let us slowly and carefully observe what takes place. If we fix the eye upon some salient point of the figure, we shall soon become convinced that it does not actually change its place, with reference to the coloured ground upon which it is depicted; and if next, we notice what change takes place on the surface of the figure, as the tablet is moved to and fro, we shall detect a '*penumbra*,' that is, an imperfectly-defined shadow, flitting across it. Now if this fact be admitted, two distinct questions will arise out of it, first, how is the shadow produced? and secondly, upon what principle is the idea of motion thus conveyed by it?—In answer to the first of these questions, I must express my belief that it is a lingering impression upon the retina, produced by that of the coloured ground, or that the colour of the figure, and that of the ground, unequally retain their hold upon the eye, as to duration of time, and consequently that one impression, if I may so express it, overlaps the other."

"After your explanation of the retention of an image for several seconds by the eye, I think I can comprehend your meaning," said Miss Villers.

"Well, if that be granted, I shall at once be able to convince you, by ocular demonstration, that the transit of a shadow over an illuminated surface will have a tendency to produce apparent motion." So saying, Mr Seymour proceeded, with lamp in hand, to the marble bust of Newton, that was mounted on a pedestal in a corner of his library, and on slowly moving the light in different directions before it, the whole party acknowledged that the countenance certainly became apparently animated by varied and changing expressions.

The party now dispersed, not less gratified than they had been instructed by the lesson they had received.

* * * * * * *

The mighty magician of the North has compared the course of a narrative to the progress of a stone rolled down hill by an idle truant boy, "which at first moveth slowly, avoiding by inflection very obstacle of the least importance; but when it has attained its full impulse, and draws near the conclusion of its career, it smokes and thunders down, making a rood at every spring, clearing hedge and ditch, like a Yorkshire huntsman, and becoming most furiously rapid in its course when it is nearest to being consigned to rest for ever. Even such," says he, "is the course of a narrative; the earlier events are studiously dwelt upon; but when the story draws near its close, we hurry over the circumstances, however important, which your imagination must have forestalled, and leave you to suppose those things which it would be abusing your patience to relate at length."

Let the reader of the present work accept this explanation as an apology for the abrupt and rapid manner in which we shall now accelerate our narrative. Since the last lecture, our history has advanced nearly three weeks, during which interval the major had made every arrangement for the approaching marriage. It was finally agreed that the ceremony should be performed at Overton church; and as the "happy couple" expressed a wish to pass their "honeymoon" in a retired part of Yorkshire, the major consented to postpone his fête until after their return; nor was he displeased at such an arrangement, as it afforded time for getting up his entertainment on a more liberal scale than could otherwise have been accomplished, and for inviting his numerous friends to attend it. We shall now avail ourselves of that peculiar Lethean property which has been often ascribed to the pen of the author, and commit the reader to the arms of Morpheus, where it is our intention that he shall remain until the morning of the nuptials.

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Reader, awake! the sun has risen, and Nature is robing herself in her most gorgeous apparel for the approaching ceremony; the family of the Lodge have been already roused from their slumbers by the attendance of minstrels, whom the vicar had directed to salute the bridal party at break of day. But hark! while we are thus trifling, the village of Overton is in a bustle; the marriage ceremony is over; the bells of the church are ringing right merrily their festive peals; many a handkerchief is waving from the cottage windows, while the doors are decorated with garlands; the vicarage is ornamented with fragments of Venetian tapestry; the peasants, dressed in their holiday garments, are carrying nosegays in their hands, to present to the bride as an offering of their respect, or to strew in her path, as an emblematic expression of their wishes.

The party having reached Osterley Park, we were proceeding to describe the banquet which had been prepared, and the various devices and emblems with which it had been decorated, under the classical direction of the vicar, when, alas! our publishers, like the harpies of old, unexpectedly pounced upon us, and warned us from the feast—"*diripiuntque dapes*," as Virgil has it.

"You have already exceeded the prescribed limits—you must close the scene: remember that you have engaged to condense the work into one volume," said they. We remonstrate, but in vain. We request but a few pages, in order that we may give our characters a dramatic exit; but they reply to us in the words of Sneer in the Critic, "Oh, never mind! so as you get them off the stage, I'll answer for it the *reader* won't care how."

You see then, gentle reader, how vain it would be to struggle against such arbitrary and tasteless masters; we shall, therefore, without any further apology, ring the manager's bell, and drop the curtain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MONTH had nearly elapsed since the bridal pair had quitted Overton; and during this period the greatest activity had been displayed by the itinerant corps of Momus, under the superintendence of their manager, Ned Hopkins, our "philosopher of the *Porch*." The various show-booths had been erected by their respective owners with an expedition that might have put many a prouder architect to shame: the marquees and the temporary rooms had been completed under the management of Tom Plank; and for those whose appetite might hold precedence of the senses of sight and hearing, ample funds of gratification had been provided by the accomplished hostess of the "Bag of Nails," whose grim troop of kettles and stewpans, had, during the whole of the week, been chirping and chuckling over the kitchen range until, for lack of rest, its very cheeks had cracked from yawning.

The numerous friends who had responded to the joint invitations of the major and Mr Seymour were fast arriving. Amidst an assemblage of fashionables from Belgravia, and the *élite* of the county, were to be seen a motley display of discordant spirits. Foremost in the field were the military friends of the major, who, in these piping times of peace, despairing of a glorious martyrdom from shells and cannon, were e'en content to lay siege to the major's well-stored pantry—to be blown up with ragoûts and turtle, fired by Burgundy, and bombarded by Champagne corks, under the command of their old and gallant comrade. Then came members of Parliament, broken down by the weighty cares of legislation; poets reduced to a "*caput mortuum*," by a species of spontaneous combustion; novelists driven wild by the creations of a distempered fancy; Cambridge wranglers so attenuated by mathematical abstractions as to have become as angular as their diagrams of demonstration; etymologists whose small and mole-set eyes gave token of their obscure and toilsome calling; explorers from the banks of "Old Euphrates," who in the silent courts of winged demons and grim idols had cunningly extorted from their "*arrow-headed*" tongues secrets of historic truth, which, for some thousand years had lain entombed in petrifaction; then succeeded, as if in pleasing and striking contrast, a rubicund party of geological tourists, radiant with the healthful glow of the mountain breeze, with hammers in hand, as if prepared to knock the world about the ears of those who disputed their sovereignty over the mighty race of Antediluvian Monsters; and, last, though very far from the least attractive part of this assemblage, came pale-faced, but limber-tongued lawyers, who, having thrown off their cares with their wigs, and plunged their briefs in the Lethe of a long vacation, had joyfully accepted the hospitality of Osterley Park, as an agreeable and seasonable recreation: but as taciturnity and quiescence do not constitute the characteristic elements of a lawyer's holiday, let not the reader conclude that they abandoned their controversial tendencies; but, on the contrary, let him admire that harmonious adjustment by which the moral world is regulated; let him acknowledge the wisdom by which tranquillity is shed over such wild spirits, and a vent or safety-valve provided for the escape of that high-pressure of pugnacity, which, no longer expended in actuating the wheels of the law, might have occasioned the most direful explosions, had it not, like the electricity of the thunder-cloud, found, if not a silent, at least a harmless conductor. It is to be deeply regretted that a reporter had not been engaged to chronicle the sayings and doings of these intellectual gladiators.

The major now anxiously awaited the arrival of every post, in expectation of a letter that might announce the day upon which Henry Beacham and his bride would return to Osterley Park. At length the long-anticipated intelligence was received, that they might be expected at Overton by four o'clock on the day after the morrow. The vicar was immediately summoned to a council, and, on his arrival, retired with the major for the purpose of consulting the chronicles of Holinshed and Froissart, touching certain points of ceremonial that might guide them in their arrangements for receiving the bride. The vicar pleaded in favour of the forms that were observed on the occasion of the public entrance of Queen Isabella into the city of Paris; but the major objected to the plan, on account of the pageant representing the siege of Troy—a point upon which the vicar, as may be readily imagined, most pertinaciously insisted; so that the gentlemen separated without having arrived at any satisfactory conclusion upon the subject, and the question was transferred to another jurisdiction. No sooner had it become known that Mr and Mrs Beacham were shortly to arrive, than the more respectable yeomen of the parish assembled at the village inn, to concert a plan for receiving them with all due honour, when it was finally arranged that the village should be decorated with garlands, and the maypole erected on the spot where its gaudy streamers had for so many ages annually floated on the breeze of spring. It was further resolved, that every person who could furnish himself with a horse should attend at a certain spot by the hour of three, in order to advance in procession, and escort the happy couple through Overton to Osterley Park. The major, upon receiving these resolutions, issued such orders as might be necessary for carrying them into effect; he also signified his desire that those musicians who had lately arrived for the impending festivities should be in attendance at the place and hour that had been fixed upon. The friends of Major Snapwell had received their final directions for the ceremonial; and Overton was overflowing with visitors. Tom had also joined his family circle.

At three o'clock on the appointed day twenty signal-guns were discharged from the Park—the village bells struck up a festive peal—the flag was hoisted on the spire of the church—and upwards of forty respectable yeomen, farmers, and tenants, mounted on their horses, and decorated with ribands and flowers, had assembled as an escort.

The church clock chimed the quarter-past three, as the carriages of Major Snapwell and Mr Seymour, and those of their guests, drawn by highly-decorated horses, entered the village; the peasants immediately drew back, so as to form an avenue through which the party might pass, while shouts of gladness rent the air. Each horseman had provided a large bough of oak or elm, so that the cavalcade in motion appeared like a moving grove, and reminded Mrs Seymour of the advance of "Birnam wood to Dunsinane." The carriages, preceded by a band of music, occupied the van of the procession; then came about fifty village maidens, each carrying in her hand a basket of flowers; next followed the horsemen; and the procession was closed by a dense group of peasants, who had come from all the country round. The vicar appeared on horseback, bustling in all directions, now conversing with the major, now with Mr Seymour; at one time moderating the pace of the horsemen, and at another keeping back the pedestrians, whose eagerness to push forward created an inconvenient crowd in the foremost ranks. Mr Twaddleton held in his right hand a wand decorated with ivy-leaves, and which resembled in appearance the thyrsus of Bacchus,* except that the cone on its summit had been replaced by a bunch of roses. This was a classical conceit; and he fully explained to the major the reason of his having adopted such a device for his wand of office.

"The rose," said he, "was dedicated by Cupid to Harpocrates, the god of Silence, to engage him to conceal the secrets of Venus; hence has this flower been considered the symbol of silence; for which reason it was customary to hang a rose over the banqueting-table, to signify that what was there spoken should be kept private, or '*under the rose;*' whence, also, to present or hold up this flower to any person in discourse served, instead of an admonition, to intimate that it was time for such person to hold his peace. In like manner," continued the antiquary, "you will observe that, by virtue of my wand, I shall impress the obligation of silence upon the crowd, and easily calm any undue clamour that may arise."

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* The thyrsus was a spear entwined with leaves or a fillet, and surmounted with a fir cone; indicative of the ancient custom of flavouring the wine with a resinous ingredient.

The cavalcade had advanced little more than half a mile, when the major suggested the propriety of halting until his nephew and niece should arrive; to this proposition the vicar readily acceded, and accordingly issued the necessary orders.

They had not, however, remained stationary above five minutes, when a carriage and four was seen at the brow of the hill, advancing in full speed. A general and simultaneous shout burst from the crowd; upon which the vicar raised his wand, and all was hushed. How far such an effect might be attributed to the influence of his wand, we shall leave the sagacious reader to determine; but the party smiled at so striking an instance of classical credulity; and Mr Twaddleton, highly gratified by his triumph, rode forward to the chariot, which was not more than two hundred yards distant. It contained Mr and Mrs Beacham, whom the vicar no sooner perceived than he again raised his wand, and again witnessed the influence of its spell. The chariot instantly stopped, and, in the next moment, Mr Twaddleton was seen in earnest conversation with the travellers. He informed them that the group they saw was a cavalcade of villagers, who had been awaiting their arrival on the road, in order to escort them in rural triumph to Osterley Park. He then presented Mr Beacham with a bag of nuts, "that the bridegroom," as he said, "might be enabled to comply with the ancient Roman custom[*] of throwing nuts amongst the boys to be scrambled for;—'*sparge, marite, nuces*,' as Virgil has it; '*da nuces pueris*,' as Catullus sings." Mr Beacham held the vicar in too much respect to laugh at his eccentricities, and he therefore accepted the bag, with a determination to gratify his wishes in so harmless a whim.

Jerry Styles was now directed to forward the two messengers to Osterley Park; and he accordingly opened a basket, from which flew two carrier-pigeons, who immediately soared into the air, and, having attained their greatest altitude, and remained apparently stationary a few seconds, darted off in the direction of Osterley Park: every eye was steadfastly fixed upon the birds; and a murmur of satisfaction and wonder ran through the ranks, as the sagacious animals lessened in the distance. (58.)

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[*] Many reasons have been assigned for this custom; the more commonly-received opinion is, that it was intended as a token of the bridegroom having left off childish diversions, and entered on a more serious state of life; whence *nucibus relictis* has passed into a proverb. This conjecture is favoured by Catullus:—

"Satis diu
Lusisti nucibus. Lubet
Jam servire Thalassio."

We have already stated that *nuces* were played with like our marbles; the custom, therefore, might be intended to express that the bridegroom had deserted his playthings.

The musicians struck up a grand march;—the whole cavalcade was in motion. Mr Beacham's chariot had been drawn on one side of the road; the carriages and horsemen proceeded to take their stations in the rear; the company in the former kissing their hands, and waving their handkerchiefs, while the latter lowered their branches, and cheered, as they passed.

The damsels in advance of Mr Beacham's carriage opened their baskets, and strewed the road with flowers as they moved forward.

"Hark!" exclaimed the major, "the pigeons have arrived at the park, and my orders have been faithfully obeyed: they are firing a salute."

"And it has been heard at the village," said the vicar; "for the bells have just commenced their peal of welcome." But we are exhausting the patience of our readers with the details of an ovation in which it is very probable they may feel but little interest; although we freely confess that, to ourselves, few pageants have such attractive charms as those innocent and simple manifestations of genuine feeling which are to be met with in rural life where the heart has not yet been chilled by that benumbing influence which has been termed "the progress of civilisation;" and which has exchanged the free and warm impulses of our nature for cold and studied forms, or for an artful display of factitious sentiment.

During the progress of the procession through the village, Mr Beacham had not been unmindful of the vicar's request; he poured a shower of nuts amongst the boys, which occasioned much frolic and good-humoured contention; while the peasants caught and cracked them, without any suspicion of the Roman custom they were assisting to perpetuate.

Having arrived at Osterley Park, the horsemen formed a double line, through which the several carriages passed. The gates were then closed; and the vicar, stepping forward, thus addressed the assembled multitude:—

"Well-beloved friends and parishioners, I am desired by Major Snapwell to inform you that refreshments have been prepared in the village, of which you may all partake on your return. Your admission into the park this evening would interfere with those arrangements which are in progress for to-morrow's jubilee; let me, therefore, request that you will all retire peaceably."

In compliance with this intimation, the whole assembly,

> "With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth,"

after having given three hearty cheers, retired to the village, where several barrels of beer had been disposed in readiness for them "to drink and make merry."

The vicar, having completed his harangue, rejoined the party at the park, where its hospitable owner had prepared a sumptuous dinner. It was, however, proposed that the vicar, with the major, and such of his guests as wished to inspect the preparations, should previously walk round the grounds. Tom and his sisters begged that they might be included in the party; a request which their father readily granted, as he said that some opportunity might occur for explaining the nature of those exhibitions which they were to witness on the following day. The same feeling induced Mr and Mrs Beacham and several visitors to join the party, hoping that they also might profit from the discourse which Mr Seymour intended to hold for the instruction of his children. The reader will probably be induced, for similar reasons, to accompany them. If he has attentively read the preceding pages of this work, we hope he has become convinced that the lessons of youth may occasionally convey instruction, as well as amusement, to those of riper years.

Ned Hopkins having been summoned to attend the party, and receive the final orders of the vicar, they proceeded to the elm-meadow, where the grand fair was to be held, and in which were disposed a long line of booths for the motley exhibitions to which they were dedicated.

"For what purpose has yonder stage been erected?" inquired the major.

"That is the *hoistings*, Sir," answered Ned Hopkins, "from which Giles Gingerly, the celebrated American Merry-andrew, will exhibit his buffoonery, and vend his nostrums."

"Hoistings! why, Ned, you pronounce the word as though your mouth had not yet recovered from the damage of your early fire-eating," said the major.

"I ask your pardon, Sir," answered Ned; "but the vicar's friend, Mr Jeremy Prybabel, took me to task, and insisted upon it that *Hustings* was a corruption of *Hoistings*, it being a stage upon which the actor is *hoisted* or elevated above the surrounding crowd."

"I believe he is right," muttered the vicar.

"Pray tell me," said Tom, "what is a merry-andrew?"

"Ask the vicar," replied his father.

"The mountebank, who united the professions of joculator and physician, was of ancient date, and during the last two centuries has figured away with considerable success. He usually appears on a temporary stage, and prefaces the vending his *nostrums* with a pompous harangue; and the better to attract the notice of the gaping spectators, he displays some of the performances practised by the jugglers, while his inseparable companion, the *boudoir*, exhibits numerous tricks, and puts the populace in good humour by wit and raillery. The medical fraternity, known in England by the name of

Merry-andrews, and who are the companions of the mountebank, derived their foundation from Dr Andrew Borde, who lived in the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Mary, and was constantly in the habit of frequenting fairs and markets, at which he harangued the populace: his speeches were extremely humorous, and occasioned considerable mirth; but, notwithstanding the infallibility of his nostrums, like Paracelsus, he died with a bottle of his elixir in his pocket. His successors in the same line naturally endeavoured to emulate the humour of their master, and hence this whole class of vagabond tinkers of flesh and bone acquired the generic appellation of *Merry-andrews*."

"And he was a punster withal, and styled himself Andreas '*Perforatus*,'"* said Mr Seymour.

"At all events that was a Latin pun," observed the major, "and therefore I may presume a redeeming feature in the opinion of the vicar."

"The origin of the word *buffoon* is curious," said the vicar. "Jesters and clowns in the farces used to swell their cheeks with wind, and then give each other a slap, which produced a noise, to the amusement of the spectators; and hence the term *Buffa*, being a word of corrupt Latinity of the Middle Ages, synonymous with *Alapa*, *i.e.*, a slap on the cheek."

"And pray what are *nostrums?*" asked Louisa.

"'*Nostrum*,' my dear, signifies *our own*, and is applied to any medicine which is prepared by a secret process, and sold for the private advantage of an individual; but since secrecy is never used on such occasions except as a cloak for imposture, the word very generally conveys an expression of ridicule or contempt."

"As you appear to have turned your antiquarian researches in this direction, may I be allowed to ask whether you can give us any account of the origin of the PANTOMIME," said Mrs Beacham; "for I have been inclined to regard it as a myth of questionable solution?"

Mr Twaddleton, never better pleased than by an appeal to his antiquarian knowledge, proceeded to state that fabulous representations, set forth in *dumb show*, were said to be the invention of Augustus; but that, according to Dr Doran, the *Pantomime* of the present day was of Italian origin, and embodied an allegory of great historical significance. PLANTALEONE, or *Planter of the Lion*, was the standard-bearer of Venice, carrying on his banner the Lion of St Mark; *Harlequin*, *Clown*, and *Columbine*, symbolically represented the other different states of Italy; amidst all whose wars Plantaleone played an important part; around his rallying banner the battle ever raged with the greatest fury: but such are the vicissitudes of human affairs, that it became the fate of him, who had saved states by his valour, to become in his turn the despised object of the very states he had so valiantly defended; and their representatives, in the mythic characters of Harlequin, Columbine, and Clown, delighted in degrading Venice, by beating and insulting her under the guise of that old and decrepit buffoon, designated *Signor Pantaloon.* "The characteristic costume of the Venetian standard-bearer," added the vicar, "was tight parti-coloured trousers, whence the name of '*Pantaloons;*' a dress which long survived the memory of the fact from which it derived its origin."

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* Andrew *Bored*.

"It is very curious," observed the major, "that a popular ceremony, a custom, or even a dress, should for so many ages survive their origin."

"You may well say so," replied the vicar; "and, thanks to the antiquary, the memory of customs long forgotten have even been recalled from oblivion by the ingenious interpretation of a sentiment, a proverb, or even a word; as, indeed, we have just witnessed in the instance of *Merry-andrew.* I could greatly amuse you by many interesting examples (59), but amidst them all, I know not one more striking than that of *Pantaloons.*"

The company proceeded in their inspection.

"What have we there, Ned Hopkins?" said Mr Seymour, as he pointed to a booth of larger dimensions than those which surrounded it.

"In that booth 'the Emperor of all the Conjurors' will perform his wonderful art of 'sleight of hand,'" replied Ned. "Look at his card of invitation," continued the wag—"'☞WALK IN—WALK IN—LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. HERE ARE MIRACLES IN ANY QUANTITY TO BE SEEN FOR TWOPENCE, AND BELIEVED IN FOR NOTHING!!!'"

"A lineal descendant of the *Tragetour* of the fourteenth century," observed the vicar; "a class of artists who, with the assistance of dexterity of execution, and various kinds of machinery, deceived the eyes of the spectators, and produced such illusions as were usually supposed to be the effect of enchantment; on which account they were frequently ranked with magicians, sorcerers, and witches. They were greatly encouraged in the Middle Ages, and travelled in large companies, carrying with them such machinery as was necessary for the performance of their deceptions."

The company passed to the next booth.

"There," said Ned, "will be exhibited vaulting, tumbling, jumping through hoops, balancing, grotesque dances by the clown, and dancing upon the tight rope."

"The tragetour rarely executed this part of the performance himself," said the vicar, "but left it to some of his confederates."

"And yet I should have thought it the most profitable department of the art," observed the major; "for it was so patronised as to secure the reception of its professors into the houses of the nobility. In the reign of Edward II. a tumbler rode before the king, and so delighted his majesty that he rewarded him with a gratuity of twenty shillings, a very considerable sum in those days."

The whole party, having expressed their satisfaction at the genius which Ned Hopkins had displayed in selecting and arranging the various kinds of amusement, were conducted by the vicar to a small enclosure at a short distance from the fair, which he had appropriated to the youths of the village, who had been trained to perform the "*Ludus Trojæ,*" according to the description left us by Virgil in the fifth Æneid.

"I shall be curious to witness the sport," said the major; "for Lazius asserts, in his commentaries upon the Roman Republic, that the jousts and tournaments, so much in fashion about two or three hundred years ago, were indebted for their origin to this game; and that '*Tournamenta*' is but a corruption of '*Trojamenta.*'"

"Undoubtedly," replied the vicar; "and the learned and noble Du Fresne entertains the same opinion; by some the word has been derived from the French *tourner*, to turn round with agility: yet the exercises have so much resemblance, as to prove the one an imitation of the other."

"I am pleased to find that the vicar has not been frightened out of his propriety by the '*Peace Congress,*' who, in fear of creating a future race of Rolandos, have denounced the introduction of warlike toys into the playground. All these preparations are highly laudable, and will no doubt afford satisfaction to the spectators, for whose amusement they have been designed; but," continued the gallant major, "on hospitable thoughts intent"—"there are other senses, my dear friend, besides the eye and ear, to be gratified upon this joyful occasion. I have not yet observed any arrangements for the dinner."

"Fear not, major; the awning which has been erected for that purpose is within sight: observe you not the banners which are floating yonder?" said the vicar.

"Ay, ay, to be sure I do; and let me tell you that you have taken up a very snug position."

Tables had been arranged, under an awning of canvas in the form of a cross, and were capable of accommodating about two hundred persons. On a platform, somewhat elevated, was another table appropriated to the major and his guests, on which covers were laid for forty."

"You perceive, major," said Mr Twaddleton, as they approached the scene of future action, "that the fare which has been provided is simple but substantial, and I trust will be considered as no less according with English hospitality than with classical propriety."

"The beef certainly predominates," said the major; "and I observe that most of the joints are roasted."

"Quite correct, Sir; the ox is the animal most frequently spoken of as furnishing food for ancient heroes; and you will remember that Homer rarely mentions any other than *roasted* meat."

"I perceive that you have been more miscellaneous in your arrangement of the upper table."

"I have placed before you a chine of beef, because Menelaus set that dish before Telemachus at the marriage-feast of his son."

"And I rejoice to see a salad for its neighbour," said the major.

"Ay, truly, an *Attic* salad, with garlic, leeks, and cheese: you no doubt remember that the poetical salad served up in the comedy of the Peace of Aristophanes was of this composition," added the vicar.

"I wish to know what seats are to be appropriated to my young friends, the little Seymours," said the major.

"I regret extremely to say, that they cannot with propriety join our party," replied the vicar, gravely.

"Not join the party! zounds, Sir, but I insist upon it;—not join the party!"—

"Be calm, major; and believe me that I shall feel the privation as keenly as yourself; but would you countenance a measure which is decidedly in opposition to every classical authority? Never, as Suetonius has expressly declared, did the young Cæsars, Caius and Lucius, eat at the table of Augustus, until they had assumed the *toga virilis*."

"A fig for Suetonius! he is not to be trusted: has it not been said, that, while he exposed the deformities of the Cæsars, he wrote with all the licentiousness and extravagance with which they lived? Besides, I appeal to your gallantry, and ask whether we ought to trust the opinion of a man, on a subject of etiquette, who was banished from the court for want of attention and respect to the Empress Sabina? You must produce some better authority, my dear Mr Twaddleton: search the Grecian writers; depend upon it that some direct or implied sanction to the plan is to be discovered; the oracles of old may generally be so interpreted as to meet the wishes of the translator."

"Gently, Major Snapwell; speak not thus irreverently of the luminaries of antiquity; nor expect me to distort passages from their original and intended significations. An idea, however, has just struck me, which may possibly be turned to your advantage; and yet there are many difficulties; for it cannot be said that this feast has been conducted with the utmost frugality; and, therefore, must not be compared with the Lacedæmonian '*Syssitia*,' or public entertainments, whither the youths were obliged, by the lawgiver, to repair as to schools of temperance and sobriety, and where, by the example and discourse of the elder men, they were trained to good manners and useful knowledge."

"A case exactly in point!" triumphantly exclaimed the major. "Must not the classical character of our entertainment convey instruction? I vow it runs parallel in every particular with the Syssitia of Lacedæmon; and I therefore affirm, that it would be illegal, according to the law of Lycurgus, to prevent the presence of the young Seymours."

"Your argument has colour, major; I certainly must admit that Mr Seymour's lessons are too valuable to be lost: well, I consent; it shall be regarded as a Lacedæmonian entertainment, and my young friends shall be accordingly accommodated with seats."

On their return from the banqueting-tables, the party inspected the preparations for the fireworks, and the ships constructed for the naumachia; we shall, however, at present decline offering any description, as we prefer explaining them in operation.

The reader will now be pleased to imagine that the party, having returned to the mansion, had partaken of the hospitable repast which the major had provided for them; he may further suppose that tea had been served up, and the amusements of the evening commenced: for it is at this moment that the course of our narrative is resumed. Mrs Beacham was delighting the assembly by a splendid display of her musical talents; the major and Mr Seymour were wearing away the time by a game of chess.

"There you sit, gentlemen," exclaimed the vicar, "so absorbed in your game, as to have remained quite insensible to the sweet sounds with which Mrs Beacham has been charming us; but you stand excused, for Seneca admits the fascinating power of the '*ludus latrunculorum*,' or game of chess. You no doubt remember the story that he tells us of one Canius Julius, who, having been sentenced to death by Caligula, was found by the centurion, when he came to conduct him to execution, so interested in a game of the '*latrunculi*,' as at first to be insensible to the summons, and that he did not prepare to depart until he had counted his men, and desired the centurion to bear witness to his having one more piece on the board than his adversary, so that the latter might not boast of a victory after his death."

"Indeed!" said the major; "but unfortunately for your story, the ancients were not acquainted with the game of chess."

"What absurd proposition am I next to expect?" cried Mr Twaddleton. "You surely cannot have read the poem to Piso, which some will have to be Ovid's, others Lucian's? but no matter; it is an ancient poem, and accurately describes the game of '*latrunculi*.' I myself believe, from a particular line in Sophocles, that chess was invented by Palamedes, at the siege of Troy; although Seneca attributes it to Chilon, one of the seven Grecian sages. My friend Mr Seymour, who is, upon all occasions, desirous of imparting wisdom through the medium of games, and of 'turning sport into science,' will no doubt agree with those who fancy that it was contrived by Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, as a method of instructing his soldiers in the military art; and I must admit that the game expresses the chance and order of war so very happily, that no place can lay so just a claim to its invention as the camp: '*ludimus effigiem belli*,'* as Vida says."

"Check to your king!" cried the major; "while you are considering of the best way to get his majesty out of the scrape, I will endeavour to extricate the vicar out of the quagmire in which he is floundering. My dear Mr Twaddleton," continued the major, "you speak as if it were an admitted fact that the '*ludus latrunculorum*' was synonymous with our chess. I admit that it was a game played with *Tesseræ* or squares, and *Calculi* or pieces; but it does not follow that it must have been chess; indeed the learned Dr Hyde, whose researches into Oriental games are as much distinguished for accurate discrimination as for profound scholarship, considers it to have resembled our *draughts*." †

"You are to move, major," said Mr Seymour.

"Then I shall take your castle, and open a fresh battery upon the vicar," replied Major Snapwell.

"So you may," cried Mr Twaddleton, "but you will not easily drive me from my position, supported as I am by Vossius and Salmasius, and an army of valiant combatants."

"The learned Hyde has endeavoured to prove that chess was first invented in India, and passed from thence to Persia and Arabia (60). Fabricius considered it a Persian game, and I must say that I am inclined to coincide with him. The terms in present use may evidently be traced to an Oriental source. *Schach*, in the Persian language, signifies king, and *schachmat*, whence our *check-mate*, the king is dead,—the original words having been transformed by progressive changes; thus we have *schach*, *échecs*, *chess;* and by a whimsical concurrence of circumstances have arisen the English words *check* and *exchequer*."

"I take your *queen*," cried Mr Seymour.

"Ay; and I take a *bishop* in return," said the major.

"Well," observed the vicar, "if an Oriental nation really gave origin to the game, it could not, at all events, have been China;

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* "War's harmless shape we sing, and boxen trains
Of youth, encountering on the *cedar* plains:
How two tall kings, by different armour known,
Traverse the field and combat for renown."

† "Ludus Latrunculorum;" ludus, Anglice dicitur *Draughts*, a trahendo calculos.—HYDE, *De Ludis Orientalium.* Oxon, 1694.

since the policy of that people is to exclude females from every kind and degree of influence and power, whereas the *queen* at chess is a powerful and important piece."

"You must not lay too much stress upon the names of the several pieces," observed the major, "since they have varied in different ages and countries. The castle is sometimes called the *rook*, from the Italian word *rocca*, which signifies a fortress placed on a rock: the piece which we call the *bishop* has been termed by English writers *alphan*, *aufin*, &c., from an Arabic word signifying an elephant; sometimes it was named an *archer;* by the Germans, the *hound*, or *runner;* by Russians and Swedes, the *elephant;* by Poles, the *priest;* and by the French, at a very early period, the *fou* or *fool;* the reason of this last appellation seems to be, that, as this piece stands on the sides of the king and queen, some wag of the times styled it the *fool*, because anciently royal personages were commonly thus attended, from want of other means of amusing themselves."

"You cannot thus account for our term *bishop*," observed Mr Seymour, "as our kings and queens have never had such attendants."

"Nor is it very easy to ascertain the period at which it was introduced," replied the major; "in Caxton's time it was styled the *elphyn*. I should think it probable that the change of name took place after the Reformation."

"It is probable that the pieces not only underwent changes in name, but changes in value or power," observed Mr Seymour, "as the game descended through different ages and countries."

Mrs Beacham, who had been for some time listening with much interest to the curious discourse we have just related, here ventured to ask a question: "As you appear to have taken some trouble to ascertain the origin of this game, you can perhaps inform me at what period it was introduced into England."

The major replied, that the learned Hyde supposed it to have been first known in our country about the time of the Conquest; but that Mr Barrington believed it to have been introduced during the thirteenth century, upon the return of Edward I. from the Holy Land, where he continued so long, and was attended by so many English.

"It is certain that our ancestors played much at chess before the general introduction of cards," observed the vicar, "as no fewer than twenty-six English families have emblazoned chess-boards and chess-rooks in their arms, and it must therefore have been considered a valuable accomplishment."

"Cards," observed the major, "must have been known in England previous to the time of Edward IV., since a statute was passed in that reign against their importation; but they did not become general for many years, and the progress of the custom appears to have been extremely slow."

"Check,—and mate!" exclaimed Mr Seymour.

"Upon my word, I have lost the game. Mr Twaddleton, I lay this to your account," said the major; "you ought not, Sir, to have intruded your antiquarian discussions at such a time."

"You have lost the game, major, because, like Charles XII. of Sweden,* you are too fond of advancing your king: but it is quite natural that you should feel mortified by your defeat: a chess-warrior never likes to be beat, because it is a trial of skill and address; chance has no place, and he therefore never loses except from the superiority of his adversary. You may remember that William the Conqueror, upon being *check-mated* by the Prince of France, knocked the chess-board about his pate, an event which became the source of much future enmity. I must say," continued the vicar, "that this, in my view of the matter, is an imperfection in the game: for if it be the type or representative of a military campaign, fortune should have some share in deciding the fate of the day; and, if I remember correctly, Sir William Jones has stated that the use of dice, to regulate the moves, was formerly introduced in the East."

"I will give the major his revenge whenever he pleases," said Mr Seymour; "but as I well know how dearly the vicar loves an antiquarian anecdote, if he will listen I will furnish him with one that will be probably new to him. Do you observe the form of the chess-board, resembling, as you perceive, two folio volumes? The origin of it was this: Endes, bishop of Sully, forbade his clergy to play at chess. As they were resolved, however, not to obey the command, and yet did not dare to have a chess-board seen in their houses or cloisters, they had them bound and lettered as books, and called them their wooden gospels. These same monks had also drinking-vessels bound to resemble the breviary, and were found drinking when it was supposed they were at prayers."

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* Voltaire tells us that Charles XII. always lost the game at chess, from his eagerness to move his king, and to make greater use of him than of any of the other pieces.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Expectata dies aderat——."

"Now came the day desired; the skies were bright
With rosy lustre of the rising light."

NEVER had the rosy fingers of Aurora shown so much reluctance in unbarring the gates of the East as on the morning of the Osterley Jubilee; at least, so thought some score of peasants, who, fevered by anxiety and expectation, had arisen from their beds long before the break of day.

At length, however, the sun arose; but, indignant no doubt at the accusations he had so unjustly suffered, he shortly veiled his fiery countenance in dark and lowering clouds. Here, then, was a fresh source of doubt and anxiety; would the day be rainy? The gardener at Overton Lodge was immediately sought and consulted; and, cheering as were his predictions, they scarcely succeeded in dispelling the gloom which shaded many a fair countenance. The apprehension of disappointment was, however, suddenly relieved; for between nine and ten o'clock the sun reappeared, beaming in all his glory, and shedding the brightest refulgence on the scene of the approaching festivities. At this period hundreds of villagers, dressed in their holiday attire, were seen pouring along the high road, or winding their way through the verdant valleys. So admirable had been the arrangements for the admission of the populace into the park, that, great as was the concourse of spectators, not the slightest impediment occurred during their entrance.

At half-past ten o'clock the whole population of the country had assembled; the various performers were on their respective stages; and the arrival of Major Snapwell and his guests was eagerly expected, as a signal for the commencement of the festivities of the day.

At length a distant murmur was heard in the direction of the house, which gradually increased as it approached the meadow, until it swelled into one grand and universal chorus. The vicar appeared with his wand of office, which he no sooner waved in the air than the murmur gradually subsided. Major Snapwell and his friends, Harry Beacham and his bride, and the Seymours with their children, and numerous visitors, followed. The several bands, stationed on the platforms erected before the show-booth, simultaneously struck up the national anthem, in which the whole multitude joined, and produced a most surprising and thrilling effect.

There were eight booths appropriated to the several exhibitions; and it had been arranged that each should commence at the same time, and repeat its performances eight times during the day; so that by dividing the spectators into eight groups, and delivering to each person a ticket distinguished by a particular number, every spectator at once knew the booth into which he was to enter; and having witnessed the exhibition, he was directed to exchange his ticket; by which means every chance of confusion was avoided, and each person was enabled to witness, successively, every performance.

The vicar and the party entered the first booth, and were followed by all those whose tickets were distinguished by No. 1; those of No. 2 at the same time entered the second booth, and so on.

The first show was appropriated to the various exhibitions of vaulting, tumbling, balancing, and rope-dancing.

During the performances of the balancer, Tom Seymour's attention was riveted on the artist; he watched every movement, and examined its effect in preserving the centre of gravity within the base; he attentively followed every change of position, and discovered the effect of such changes upon the line of direction.* As to the *wire dancing*, Tom observed that he saw very plainly the swinging of the wire backwards and forwards diminished the difficulty, and assisted the actor in keeping his equipoise.

"See, see!" exclaimed Louisa, "how very extraordinary! I declare that the plate, sword, key, and tobacco-pipe, are all balanced as they revolve on the chin of the performer."

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* See page 53.

"And do you not know, Louisa," replied Tom, "that the revolution of the plate and sword, which appears to render the execution so much more astonishing, actually diminishes the difficulty of the performance?" *

Thus did Tom Seymour continue to point out successively the philosophical principles upon which each of the tricks might be supposed to depend.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the artist, "I shall next have the honour to exhibit, for the first time in public, a most wonderful triumph in the art of balancing; an equilibrium which has hitherto been deemed impracticable, since the utmost skill and perseverance have for ages failed to accomplish it. It is no less than a solution of that problem which Columbus denounced as impossible by the very stratagem he employed to evade it. It is to make an egg stand upon one end!! I have here the egg of a hen, and I shall send it round in order that you may be satisfied there is no deception,—that the shell is entire, and has not in any way been tampered with. While this examination is proceeding, I will remind my friends of the anecdote to which I just now alluded:—On the return of Columbus from his first voyage, numerous banquets were given him by the nobility; at one of which a shallow courtier, envious of his honours, abruptly asked him whether he thought that, in case he had not discovered the Indies, there would have been wanting men in Spain capable of the enterprise. To this Columbus made no direct reply, but taking an egg, invited the company to make it stand on one end. Every one attempted it, but in vain; whereupon he struck it upon the table, broke one end, and left it standing on the broken part; illustrating, in this simple manner, that, when he had once shown the way to the new world, nothing was easier than to follow it. Now, I trust, ladies and gentlemen, you are satisfied by your inspection that I have not broken nor altered the natural surface of the shell, and yet you shall see I can balance it on its broader end."

The professor then, after some moments engaged in the adjustment, achieved his object, to the astonishment of all present.

"It really does surprise me, for I feel satisfied the egg was fairly balanced without any preparation of the shell," said Mr Seymour.

"I do not exactly understand why it should be considered so next to impossible to make the egg stand on end," observed Tom.

"The difficulty consists in our inability so to regulate the centre of gravity of the egg as to keep the *line of direction* † within the point upon which we attempt to poise it. This would be sufficiently difficult with a body uniformly solid, and of the same shape; but the fact of its interior being a moveable liquid increases the difficulty to the highest possible amount."

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* See page 63.

† See page 53.

The artist, who had keenly eyed the Seymour party during this exhibition of his skill, saw very clearly the doubts and difficulties he had raised. "It is not usual," said he, "for the professors of our art to explain their movements and expose their secrets; but, observing the interest this achievement has excited, I have no objection to declare publicly that it has been effected by means strictly philosophical; and, well knowing the plan adopted by Mr Seymour, of teaching his family the first principles of science by means of sport, I will, in confidence, communicate to him the philosophical expedient (61) of which I have availed myself for the accomplishment of this long-sought-for object."

The next booth into which our party entered was that of Crank Smirky, the celebrated conjuror, who invited the company to witness his wonderful display of the art of legerdemain: he was dressed as an astrologer, with a loose gown of green velvet, and a red cap; he had a long, gray beard, and his nose was bestraddled by a pair of green spectacles; while in his hand he held the mystic rod, or conjuring stick, to which tradition has ascribed so many magical influences. (62.)

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the mystic professor, "I shall have the honour of convincing you this day that my single hand is more than a match for all the sharp eyes of Overton. You will admit that a beautiful eye makes silence eloquent,—a kind eye, contradiction an assent,—and an enraged eye, beauty deformed; but my hand shall, by its magic influence, make eloquence dumb, assent a contradiction, and deformity beautiful."

So saying, the professor beckoned a villager, who sat near the stage, to approach and assist him in the performance of his first grand trick.

"Dobby," exclaimed his terrified wife, "sit thee still; that man has dealings with the old one: I would not that he should touch your garment for all the gingerbread in the fair!"

This exclamation of the terrified wife set the whole audience in a roar, and produced a confusion which the skilful conjuror is always anxious to create when any sly work is to be performed. In truth, this scene had been previously concerted by the renowned Crank Smirky, who had engaged this said Dobby as his confederate. A series of very amusing tricks were then performed with cards and counters; such, for instance, as desiring some person to draw a card from the pack, and, having observed what it was, to return it; which card, to the wonder of the company, was immediately found in Dobby's pocket. Mr Seymour informed his children that the explanation of this trick would serve to show the manner in which most of the deceptions on cards were performed. He said that the conjuror's pack of cards always contained a card, technically termed a "*brief* card," or, "the *old gentleman*," which is one made on purpose by the cardmaker, and is a little larger than any of the rest; the performer always knows it by feeling it, and can easily force it upon the unsuspecting drawer; should he, however, attempt to take any other, the conjuror, under some pretence, shuffles again, till at length he induces him to take the one intended for him. After the card has been introduced again into the pack, the performer, without any difficulty, withdraws it, and the confederate is called upon to produce the duplicate which had been previously placed in his pocket.

The philosopher and physician, Jerome Cardan, also tells us that Lezum, a Venetian patrician, used to cheat him by soaped cards, so that the rest of the pack would slip from them, when thrown down.

The juvenile party were told that the several deceptions with coin, or counters, which they had witnessed, were accomplished by a species of dexterity acquired only by practice, and termed "*palming;*" it consisted in being able to retain a shilling, halfpenny, or counter, in the palm of the hand, while it remained extended. It is by such dexterity that the well-known game of "*Thimble-rig*," or "*Thimble and Pea*" is performed. Three thimbles, or small cups, are placed upon a table. The player then proceeds to bet any given sum that he will point to the one under which the pea is concealed: the crafty juggler does not in reality place the pea under any one of them, but while pretending to do so, retains it in his hand by pressing the little finger against the palm, by which he is enabled at the proper time, dexterously to convey the pea under any one of the thimbles that may suit his purpose. Mr Seymour here added, that he had a faint recollection of some such game of chance having been practised by the Romans.

"You no doubt refer," said the vicar, "to that mentioned in Cicero*—'*micare digitis*,' as the phrase was, and which I believe is common at the present day among the vulgar in Italy, and called '*Morra;*' and what is very curious, we are informed by Sir G. Staunton that the same game is played at this time at Canton; but it has not the least resemblance to that known by the name of '*Thimble-rig*.' It consists in each person raising or compressing his fingers, at the same instant that each is called upon to guess the number of fingers thus held up by the other: the victory of course must fall to him who has the quickest eye, and the readiest tongue."

The conjuror then proceeded to perform a feat which excited considerable interest, heightened, in no small degree, by the clever by-play and diverting conversation that accompanied it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," began the performer, "you have doubtless heard that, by means of the electric telegraph, thoughts may be transmitted to any distance in an almost incredibly short interval of time. It is my present purpose to show you that liquids can be also thus conveyed; and that a glass of wine may be instantly despatched to a distant friend, so as to enable you to *hobnob* with him, should it so please you, even at the antipodes.

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* Cicero, Divin. xi. 41, and Off. iii., 23.

" For this purpose I beg to call your attention to the arrangements displayed before you. You will perceive that upon this stand is a decanter filled with red wine, and upon another similar stand, in a distant part of the room, is placed an empty goblet; now, by means of an electric chain, I intend to pass the wine from the one to the other!"

The professor then proceeded to remove the stopper, under the plea that glass was a bad conductor of electricity, and at the same moment inverted a tin shade over the decanter. He then placed a similar cover over the goblet. His next move was to connect the two vessels by a metallic chain. These arrangements having been duly adjusted, time alone was required for the consummation of his trick; and for this purpose he availed himself of the usual indulgence granted to all wonder-workers, that of allowing them to relate at their pleasure any amount of possible or impossible stories, anecdotes, or stirring incidents, just as in the darker ages of superstition certain cabalistic rites and mysterious ceremonies were interposed for the same object, of gaining time and diverting attention.

Our crafty magician then proceeded with the following narrative:—

" Once upon a time, a certain old lady received from her son, a soldier in the Crimea, a letter, in which he very graphically described his painful sufferings from the want of a new pair of boots. The affectionate mother hastened to procure the desired article, in order that it might be forwarded by the swiftest possible conveyance; and being deeply impressed with the idea of telegraphic speed, she at once proceeded to attach the new boots to one of the posts on the railway, taking care to affix ample directions for their secure delivery; now it so fell out that in a short time a beggar passed that way, and espying the span-new boots dangling from the telegraphic pole, and no doubt believing, as many honest wayfarers do believe, that exchange is no robbery, forthwith captured the inviting prize, and conscientiously replaced it by the transference of the leathery ruins from his own feet, and thus refreshed he merrily went his way. The anxious old lady, in due time, repaired to the station, for the purpose, as we may presume, of ascertaining whether the boots had yet started on their long journey; and what words can express the conflicting doubts that sprang up in the mind of the good old dame, when she beheld the tattered remnants, in the room of her newly-purchased boots!—it was however but the conflict of a moment, for her doubts were instantly replaced by a well-sustained belief, that the boots must not only have reached their destination, but that her son had thus gratefully acknowledged their receipt by "sending back his old and used-up leathers."

The conjuror here thanked the audience for the patient hearing he had received, adding that he cared not to carry the episode farther, except to state that the victimised old lady had been taken in charge by an official, on the plea of her having tampered with the telegraph; a very harsh measure certainly; for after all, as she said, "what had she done but carried a small parcel with not more than half a dozen *letters* to the *Post?*"

"Well done, my good old granny," vociferated the major, "what are such *posts for*, I should like to know, but to carry a *line or two* to a distant region?"

Nothing is so welcome to the conjuror as a laugh opportunely raised, and it must be confessed that upon this occasion the major did good service in promoting the humour and sustaining the interest of the entertainment.

There is not a fact better understood by the true master of his art, than that the amount of pleasure afforded by his exhibition will always vary with the temper of his audience; wisely, therefore, does he court every occasion to conciliate their favour, and to raise the standard of their risible susceptibilities.

"I shall now," continued the conjuror, "relieve the company from farther suspense by ascertaining whether or not our electric carrier has faithfully discharged its mission, and how far I may claim the merit of a successful operator, or deserve the discomfiture of an infatuated old woman. That is a question for your verdict, ladies and gentlemen of the jury."

The conjuror then removed the cover from the decanter—It was empty! and on uncovering the goblet, it was full of wine!

"Upon my word, Mr Conjuror, I do not know which most to admire—your story of the old lady, or your trick of the decanter and goblet; we have heard the one, so now, pray, let us learn the secret of the other," said Mr Seymour.

The major thought he might as well at once confess that he had not the slightest clue to its explanation.

"And what on earth could the electric chain have had to do with it?" asked the vicar.

"Nothing at all; it was but an ingenious sham, to divert the attention of the spectators from the straight course of inquiry. I strongly suspect," added Mr Seymour, "that by reverting to the trick* of the '*magical-bottle*,' we shall very readily obtain a solution of the problem."

Mr Seymour was right; the following is the simple explanation.—In the bottom of the decanter, filled with wine, a tube of small bore had been inserted, through which the liquid could not pass, until after the admission of air, by the removal of the stopper, when it would even then only slowly percolate into a basin concealed in the stand. In the tin shade, covering the goblet, there was a chamber previously filled with wine, and which, like that in the decanter, required for its discharge the admission of air, which was dexterously effected by the thumb of the operator pushing aside a small slide in the upper part of the cover, at the instant it was inverted over the goblet; and which thus performed the office of a *vent-peg*. But since in each case, in consequence of the small size of the orifice, the flow was necessarily slow, the operator was obliged to gain time, by some such artifice as we have described, in order to obviate the impatience of his spectators.

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* See page 162.

"Although electricity could have nothing whatever to do with this trick, I understand that, upon other occasions, it has been enlisted into the service of the conjuror with marvellous effect," observed the major.

"Indeed has it," replied Mr Seymour, "and if you will allow me to describe an exploit I lately witnessed, I think you will be confirmed in that opinion."

"By all means; let us hear it."

"Close to the ceiling of a lofty room was suspended a narrow-necked bottle; but I must first tell you that the conjuror, by a previous trick of sleight of hand, had converted several counters into as many half-crowns, and which he now proposed to throw into the aforesaid bottle, although the neck of it was too small to have admitted your little finger. He then threw himself into an attitude, which for grace and energy might well have challenged that of the Discobulus of Myron, in order to bring, at the instant, all the required muscles into full play and concentrated action; and whilst in the act of throwing forward his right arm, in the hand of which were held the half-crowns, we heard such a clatter in the bottle as left no doubt in the minds of the spectators that the coins had performed their appointed errand. The bottle was then removed and broken, and sure enough the half-crowns were extracted from it!"

"Now, for your explanation," said the major.

"That I think you must have anticipated; the requisite number of half-crowns had been previously introduced, and suspended in the neck of the bottle, by an iron wire in connection with a voltaic battery; at the same moment that the conjuror thrust forth his arm as if in the act of hurling, a confederate broke the voltaic contact, and down fell the coin."

Should the reader remember the royal question,* said by Peter

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* "But, Goody, tell me where, where, where's the seam?

* * * * * *

How, how, the devil got the apple in?"

Pindar to have been addressed to the old cottage dame—how she could possibly have contrived to get the apples into the inside of the dumpling?—he may very probably be induced to ask how the conjuror could have introduced the half-crowns through the narrow neck of his bottle? If so, we must refer him to the glass-blower for an explanation.

The next performance was that of the "MYSTERIOUS LADY," an exhibition which had created a very unusual sensation during the preceding London season; persons of all ranks having visited her saloon in Piccadilly. An explanation of the means by which her exploits were accomplished will be hereafter duly afforded (63); at present we have only, as spectators, to describe the passing scene.

At the end of a long booth, and with a considerable space between her and the audience, sat a veiled lady, with her back to the company, as represented in the woodcut at the head of the present chapter. The confederate, or person charged with the conduct of the entertainment, then presented himself, and, passing along the ranks of spectators, very courteously, in a subdued tone of voice, challenged any lady or gentleman to ask a question, or to place in his hand any convenient article he might have about his person, in order that the "Mysterious Lady" might answer the one, or describe the other.

It must be stated that, in each case, the confederate was to be told in a whisper the particular information demanded, when with that knowledge he proceeded to put his question to the "Mysterious Lady," and to obtain her answer. The following examples may serve to explain the manner in which the process was conducted:—

*1.—*Q.* State this gentleman's usual breakfast-hour.

A. *Ten o'clock.*

2.—*Q.* Let us know the number of persons usually assembled at this meal.

A. *Six; that is, five without himself.*

The confederate now produced a pack of cards, and desired some one of the company to place any number of them he pleased in his hand.

3.—*Q.* Mention the number of cards I hold in my hand.

A. *Seven.*

4.—*Q.* And which is the top card?

A. *A Club.*

5.—*Q.* What club?

A. *The Queen of Clubs.*

"Now, madam," said the confederate, addressing a lady on the front bench, "have the kindness to place in my hand any convenient article you may have about you."

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* The questions are here numbered for the sake of future reference in the notes.

6.—*Q.* Listen!—let us know what this lady has placed in my hand.

A. *A fourpenny piece.*

7.—*Q.* Come, pray say what this gentleman has given me.

A. *A seal.*

8.—*Q.* Yes; say what is on it.

A. *A coat of arms.*

9.—*Q.* Tell us what this gentleman had for dinner yesterday—begin with fish.

A. *He had cod-fish.*

10.—*Q.* Let us know what meat.

A. *Beef.*

11.—*Q.* Undoubtedly you can tell us what followed.

A. *A tart.*

12.—*Q.* Now mention what this lady has placed in my hand.

A. *A ring.*

13.—*Q.* I beg you to say in what month did this gentleman come to town.

A. *In May.*

14.—*Q.* On what day?

A. *On the eighth.*

At this stage of the proceedings one of the major's guests, a learned member of the bar, impatient, no doubt, to signalise himself as an acute hand in a cross-examination, insisted upon questioning the lady himself, without any interference of the confederate; "For that purpose," said he, "I have taken from my pocket a curious cameo, and I beg you, Sir, who have hitherto constituted yourself as the only medium of communication, to notice it silently, and leave me to put my questions." To which the confederate, after inspecting the cameo, merely said,—"Somewhat QUAINT—IT'S REMARKABLY RELIEVED—EVERY LINE—"

"Stop, Sir," interrupted the learned gentleman; "not another word!—Now, madam," continued he, glancing as he spoke an assuring smile upon the audience, as much as to say, Now, mark how skill can detect deception! "I hold in my hand a rare cameo, and I beg you to answer this question":—

15. *Q.* What is the design figured upon it?"

"*It is a squirrel,*" was the correct and ready answer of the lady.

The learned counsel suddenly dropped upon his seat like a person completely beaten and bewildered, while the exultation, most unmercifully expressed at his discomfiture, was anything but calculated to restore his confidence and self-esteem. The vicar declared that the soothsayer Calchas could not have been more dismayed at Colophon.*

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* The vicar alluded to the story told of Calchas: it was predicted that, should he ever find one more skilled than himself in divination, he must perish. This

The audience now retired, filled with astonishment; and many were the conjectures as to the means by which the performances were accomplished—ventriloquism, mesmerism, acoustics, optical contrivances, were, each in its turn, suggested as affording the most satisfactory solution of the problem; whereas, the reader will hereafter find that the real secret was nothing more than an ingenious cipher, the key of which will be described in a supplementary note. (63.)

The wonderful feats of the FIRE-KING, or, the "KING OF THE SALAMANDERS," as he styled himself, became the next centre of attraction; an exhibition which realised all the legends of the fiery ordeal of former ages, and proved that philosophy can even penetrate into the dark mysteries and superstitions of priestcraft, and explain, by the aid of natural agency, phenomena long regarded as evidences of superhuman interposition.

His first exploit consisted in the display of a much-soiled garment, which he held out for inspection, and demanded to know how ordinary mortals would proceed for its purification. The vicar, who was seated on the front seat, being in the humour of "*thinking aloud*," as the phrase is, audibly declared, to the no small amusement of the major and his party, that "they would wash it in the stream, and dry it on the shelly sands, even as did the maidens whom Ulysses descried on the shores of Phæacia." If Socrates were guided by his familiar demon, it is equally clear that the worthy vicar must have thus spoken through the inspiration of the classical spirit that ever presided over his thoughts and actions; for he afterwards declared he had not been conscious of having given an audible expression to what he acknowledged had been passing through his mind on the instant.

"I well know," said the Fire-King, "that such might be the usual mode of proceeding—but, behold mine!"—upon which he threw the garment upon a dish of burning charcoal, and, after a short interval, drew it forth perfectly white, and unscathed by the fire.

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is what I consider my introductory experiment. I shall proceed to convince you that, like the Salamander, I can plunge my hand into molten lead and red-hot copper, in a state of fusion, with perfect safety and impunity."

This extraordinary feat he performed with great deliberation and self-possession, and it called forth expressions as varied as the intelligences and susceptibilities of those who witnessed it: consternation, incredulity, doubt, and admiration were the feelings simultaneously excited, but very unequally apportioned amongst the assembled com-

prediction was verified at Colophon, after the Trojan war. Mopsus, another augur, mentioned the exact number of figs on the branches of a certain fig-tree, after Calchas had failed, when the chagrin which this defeat occasioned, it is related, caused his death.

pany; while a very few thought they could recognise the application of some philosophical principle.

In conformity with the custom of all wonder-workers, in order to sustain the interest of the spectators, he reserved what he considered the most marvellous of his exploits, as the crowning wonder of the entertainment.

"Behold!" cried he, "a red-hot crucible; and know, ye of little faith, that I am prepared to freeze some spring-water in it!" upon which he poured into its burning interior a given quantity of water, adding at the same time a small portion of some unkown liquid; when, in a very short time, he extracted from the crucible, still visibly glowing, a notable mass of ice!

As if it were not deemed sufficient to appease the most inordinate appetite for the marvellous, or enough to tax the credulity of the gaping spectators, the Fire-King no sooner displayed the ice so wonderfully produced, than, by casting upon it a small particle, he actually set fire to it, and thus caused it to burn with a bright flame for several seconds!

"Most wonderful!" exclaimed the vicar; "'*the fire had power in the water, forgetting his own virtue; and the water forgat his own quenching nature!*'" *

"That it is truly astonishing, I must admit!" added the major.

Mr Seymour, however, did not concur in these expressions of surprise, but told his friends that he believed all the phenomena they had witnessed might be satisfactorily explained by a law relating to the conduction of heat to bodies in a certain condition, and which had only of late years been made the subject of investigation. (64.)

After the exhibition of the prodigies of Fire, came one that displayed the wonders of Light.

It consisted in a variety of optical representations and illusions. The camera-obscura presented a moving picture of the surrounding scene. The phantasmagoria exhibited a variety of ghastly objects, which, alternately receding from and approaching the audience, called forth shrieks of terror and amazement. Amongst the most appalling of these figures was the headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow, so inimitably described in the "Sketch Book:" it will be remembered that the body of this trooper having been buried in the churchyard, its ghost was believed to ride forth every night in quest of its head, and that the rushing speed with which he passed along the hollow, like a midnight blast, was owing to his being in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak. This rapid movement was admirably represented in the phantasmagoria: at first the figure appeared extremely diminutive, and at a great distance; but almost immediately its size became gigantic, and it seemed as if within a few feet of the audience, and then suddenly vanished. After an instant of utter darkness, the figure was again visible at a great distance: the schoolmaster, Crane, was also seen belabouring the starveling ribs of his steed, old Gunpowder, and quickening his pace towards the very spot where the spectre was stationed. The whole audience were breathless with horror. Crane arrived at the bridge, over which the headless figure opposed his passage. "Mercy upon us!" cried a faint voice from one of the back seats; "the ghost has found his head, and is carrying it before him on the pommel of his saddle."—"Hush, hush!" cried another voice. Crane's horse had taken fright; away he dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Crane's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight. The goblin pressed hard upon him; he was not more than a yard behind him, when he was seen to take up his head, and with gigantic force to hurl it at the pedagogue; it encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash; he was tumbled headlong in the dust; the goblin whisked past like a whirlwind, and the company were once again in total darkness.

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* Wisdom of Solomon, chap. xix., v. 20.

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mr Seymour, "this is one of the most complete illusions I ever witnessed."

"It is most ingeniously managed," said the vicar; "the figures really diminish and enlarge at pleasure, like Milton's incorporeal spirits."

The populace of course were stupified with wonder, and scarce thought "their eyes did offices of truth."

"I am quite impatient," said Tom, "to learn how so extraordinary an effect can have been produced. You told me this morning that a phantasmagoria was nothing more than an improved magic lantern; but how is it possible for the slides to be so managed as to make the figures approach and retire from you, and, above all, to make them move their bodies, and throw their arms into different attitudes?"

"In the first place, the figures only *appear* to approach you, for they are thrown upon a surface which never changes its place; the whole is therefore an optical illusion, arising from the fact that we estimate the distance of an object by its apparent magnitude; when, therefore, the figure began to diminish in size, the mind instantly assumed that it was receding from the eye; and the illusion was still farther heightened by the absence of all other objects * by which it might be compared."

At this moment Mr Seymour was interrupted by the appearance of the performer, who announced his intention of submitting another optical illusion, which he trusted would afford equal satisfaction.

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* It is to this latter circumstance that the panorama is principally indebted for its magical effects; and we would caution the proprietors of such exhibitions to be more careful in excluding windows and railings from the sphere of the spectator's vision; such neglect goes far to destroy the illusion.

A series of extraordinary effects were now exhibited by means of concave mirrors.* Aërial images were produced, so illusive in their appearance, that the spectators could not believe in their immateriality until they attempted to grasp them. In this manner were presented flowers, fruit, a human skull, and a dagger; the latter of which terrified the spectator by the sudden and violent manner in which its point approached him. With this illusion the amusements concluded; the light of day was admitted; and the performer, stepping forward, announced the termination of his exhibition in the words of Shakspeare:—

"Our revels now are ended: these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air."

The villagers, as they poured out of the booth, and mingled with their companions in the fair, with their wonted propensity for the marvellous, related, in most exaggerated terms, the wonders they had encountered in the region of shadows. Nothing is swallowed with more avidity than tales of mystery, especially if spiced with a few grains of horror: we cannot, therefore, be surprised at the anxiety so generally manifested by those who had not yet witnessed the optical performances, to exchange their tickets for such as would secure their admission into the popular booth.

The next entertainment was a display of ventriloquism, by a pupil of the celebrated Baron de Mengen.

"Now," said the vicar, "we are to witness a deception upon the ear, such as we have just seen practised on the eye."

Mr Twaddleton was quite correct in this observation; for, notwithstanding all the mystery with which the subject has been invested by credulity, ventriloquism is nothing more than a skilful modulation of the voice, so as to imitate the gradations of sound, as they affect the ear in nature under all the circumstances of distance and obstruction; in short, imposing upon the ear as a perspective painting does upon the eye. At the same time, the deception is heightened by directing the attention to particular points; for we never distinguish very accurately the quarter from which sounds approach, and our imagination is apt to refer to the spot to which our attention has been artfully directed.†

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* Sir David Brewster has enumerated various extraordinary illusions, which may be thus produced, in his work on Natural Magic.

† In the cloisters of Neville's Court, in Trinity College, Cambridge, there is a spot near the entrance of the library, where, by stamping the foot on the pavement, and at the same time directing attention to a knocker on the door at the other end, an echo is produced, so exactly counterfeiting the sound of a knocker's rap, that the author has found it difficult to persuade a stranger that he did not, as he believed, actually see the motion of the knocker upon the door: so invincible was the confederacy between the ear and the eye.

The ventriloquist, moreover, better to conceal the movement of his lips, takes care to select such words as do not contain labial consonants.

In this booth were also exhibited the several interesting effects produced by the modification and reflection of sound, as already described. Tom Plank undertook the "*Invisible Girl,*" and to his credit be it recorded that he performed his part most successfully. Well acquainted with the sundry little secret partialities of his fellow-villagers, he contrived to make the *Invisible Girl* give answers that tinged the face of many a fair maiden with a blush, while the hearts of the favoured swains palpitated with unexpected joy.

An exhibition of more than ordinary interest, called the TELEPHONIC CONCERT, concluded this part of the entertainment. Mr Seymour informed his young friends that they were about to witness a very striking illustration of two great principles which govern the conduction of sound, and its increase by resonance; whereby musical notes may be transmitted from a distance through solid wooden cylinders, and by contact with a "*sounding-board*" be considerably increased in force; he told them that to Professor Wheatstone, the magician who had conducted our thoughts and wishes through miles of wire, we are now indebted for bringing to the astonished ear the sounds of far off-music.

The exhibitor who presented himself to the audience was surrounded on the stage by four harps; and he thus introduced his subject:—

"I have the honour, I believe for the first time in this country, to produce an acoustic phenomenon, no less wonderful than novel, for

> 'Those musicians who shall play to you, hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence, yet straight they shall be here.'"*

From the first harp an air, as if proceeding from a pianoforte, astonished the audience; from the second, the clear notes of the clarionet; from the third, those of a violin; and from the fourth, the deeper notes of the violoncello; and each harp having singly delivered its characteristic music, the whole combined, and produced a concert of striking and melodious effect.

"Are you not astonished, vicar?" asked Mr Seymour.

"Verily am I, not less so than was Ferdinand at the strains of Ariel, in whose words I may well ask—

> 'Where should the music be?
> In the air, or the earth?'"

"Well, my dear children," said Mr Seymour, "after all you have learnt on the subject of sound, and the way it can be transmitted through solid bodies, and be increased by contact with surfaces that are capable of reciprocating it, or of resounding the notes in unison with it, I do not think you will be at a loss to explain all you have heard upon this interesting occasion."

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* First Part of Henry IV., act 2, sc. 1.

Mrs Beacham said she understood that the different musical instruments were placed at a distance, and that each communicated with the respective harps by a long, solid, cylinder of wood, through which the sounds were inaudibly transmitted, and only reproduced unchanged in their qualities and intensities upon the contact of the conducting-rod with the sounding-board of the harp."

"And thus," added Mr Seymour, "satisfactorily proving the power of a solid to convey sound, and the resonant, or reciprocating influence of a vibrating plane to enhance and diffuse it." *

"I tell you what," said the vicar, "after the lesson I have received this day, I will lose no time in looking after the sounding-board of my pulpit, for I strongly suspect there must be something very wrong in its construction."

The crowd was now dispersed by the appearance of a placard announcing the suspension of all the performances for two hours; and informing the populace that the interval would be devoted to various sports and pastimes in the adjoining field.

The revellers, accordingly, hastened to the spot where the several sports were to take place, and to which they were directed by the sound of a bugle.

We have stated that a small enclosure had been prepared for the youths of the village, who were to perform the "*Ludus Trojæ*," or Troy Game. The major and his party had taken possession of the seats placed for their accommodation under an awning; and the boys, classically dressed, and furnished with little arms and weapons, were mustered *in circo.* Each youth was mounted on a pony; and the troop having ridden round the ring, and surveyed the spectators, the vicar arose from his seat, and, like the sage Epytides, gave the signal of attack by a crack of the whip. They now arranged themselves in two battalions, and, hurling their javelins with an air of proud defiance, wheeled and charged, and urged the sportive war. At the conclusion of the game, the vicar called the principal youth, or "*princeps juventutis*," and presented him with a basket of fruit, which he desired him to divide amongst his companions.

The populace now separated into different groups: one party proceeded to witness a wrestling-match; another, to see the foot-race; a third, to be present at a match of quoits; for the vicar had provided all these games, in imitation of the ancient *Penthalum* or *Quinquertium.* While observing the game of quoits, the vicar displayed much classical erudition; he said that Homer had represented Ajax and

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* See page 209.

Ulysses as greatly skilled in the sport; and that Ovid, when he brings in Apollo and Hyacinth playing at it, had given a very elegant description of the exercise,* although it suggested a caution in the practice of it. The vicar also reminded us that Perseus had thus unfortunately killed his grandfather. Scaliger, he continued, is of opinion, that the throwing the *discus*, or quoit, is but an improvement of the old sport of casting the sheephook; a conjecture which, the vicar thought, received some support from a passage in the fourth Iliad.

"Mr Twaddleton," cried Mr Seymour, "you look at every sport with the eye of a classic or antiquary; I, on the other hand, as you well know, cautiously examine every action, to discover whether some scientific principle may not find an illustration. On the present occasion, I am desirous of directing the attention of the children to the manner in which yonder skilful player hurls his quoit."

"I do not exactly comprehend the object they have in view in throwing the quoits," said Louisa.

"Do you not perceive that two iron pins, or *hobs*, are driven into the ground, at the distance of eighteen or twenty yards asunder?" asked her father.

"To be sure, and I suppose that each player attempts to hit one of those pins."

"The players stand at one of the *hobs*, and throw an equal number of quoits at the other; the nearest of them to the hob are reckoned towards the game. When they have cast all their quoits, the candidates go over to the point at which they have been throwing, and when they have determined the state of the game, they throw their quoits back again at the hob where they had before stood; and thus continue to act, on alternate sides, till the game is ended."

"I now understand it," cried Louisa.

"You doubtless know, Mr Twaddleton," said Mr Seymour, "that the casting of stones, darts, and other missiles was among the amusements practised in the twelfth century by the young Londoners."

"*Casting of the bar*," replied the vicar, "was formerly a part of a hero's education; and kings and princes were admired for their agility and grace in throwing 'the stone, the bar, and the plummet.' Henry the Eighth, even after his accession to the throne, retained the casting of the bar among his favourite amusements. The sledge-hammer, and, among rustics, an axletree, were also used for the same purpose as the bar and the stone."

"The game of quoits is certainly far superior to such rude pastimes," said Mr Seymour, "on account of its depending less on mere strength, and more upon superior skill."

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* Ovid's Metamorphoses, lib. x.

"Did you not say," asked Tom, "that its action would illustrate some principle of science? I have been looking at the quoit, which I perceive is a circular piece of iron with a hole in the middle, but I cannot discover in what manner any scientific principle can be connected with its motion."

"If you will attentively observe a skilful player, you will perceive that he steadies the flight of the quoit, by imparting to it a spinning motion: were he not thus to *rifle* it, you would find that it would fly very far from the mark."

"Upon the same principle, I suppose, that we impart to the ball a spinning motion at the game of *bilboquet?*" said Louisa.

"Precisely so," replied her father, who also stated that the body was made to rotate on its shorter axis, for the reasons before explained;* and that while whirling through the air it always preserves its plane, whatever the position of that plane may be, and however it may be inclined to the direction in which the quoit travels. He moreover observed that it affords an excellent illustration of the motion of the earth round the sun, showing how the axis of rotation remains parallel to itself during its annual journey without any respect whatever to the sun.

The "*penthalum*" having been concluded, the populace retired into several booths which were appropriated to refreshments. The shows then recommenced; those not already described were principally devoted to the exhibition of wild animals, an entertainment which the vicar considered as sanctioned by the highest classical authority; although he at once rejected a proposition made by the major to render the amusement still more in accordance with ancient custom, by encouraging a fight between a lion and a tiger.

The hour had arrived for the grand banquet; and, by the command of the major, the band paraded the fair, playing the inviting tune of "Oh, the roast beef of Old England!" The populace hastened to the tent, and each took his place according to the number upon his ticket.

We shall not detain our readers by an account of the dinner; it will be sufficient to state, in the language generally used upon such occasions, that the whole went off with great *éclat*, and gave universal satisfaction to the delighted guests.

For the amusement of his military friends, the major had made arrangements for reviving the ancient game of quintain, to be played after the banquet. It may be necessary to state that the quintain is a pastime of high antiquity. It was originally nothing more than the trunk of a tree, or a post set up for the practice of young beginners in chivalry. Afterwards a staff, or spear, was fixed in the earth, and a shield hung upon it was the mark to strike at. The dexterity of the performer consisted in smiting the shield in such a manner as to break the fastening and to bring it to the ground. In process of time this diversion was much improved: instead of the staff and shield, a grotesque wooden figure was introduced, and it was so contrived to move upon a pivot, that if it were struck unskilfully it would turn out and give the performer a severe blow. The quintain which the major had prepared for the present occasion consisted of a wooden figure fixed upon a pivot, and holding in its outstretched arm a bag of flour. Those who ran at it and missed it were, of course, laughed at; while he who struck the figure full with his lance gave the beam a sudden whirl; and, unless he was very nimble, was covered with flour from the bag which was thus brought into contact with him.

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* Page 103.

"Ned Hopkins," exclaimed Mr Seymour, with a significant glance at the wag, "I well know that you are an adept in the game of quintain."

Ned at once caught the sarcastic allusion,* and by an intelligent gesture, indicated his determination to shirk the subject.

The reader must now consent to retire from the scene of frolic, and leave the villagers to the undisturbed enjoyment of their jollity. The major and his party returned to the house, where they remained until the hour approached at which the fireworks were to be discharged, and the festivities of the day concluded. Mr Seymour accompanied his children to the stage erected for the pyrotechnic exhibition, in order that he might explain the construction of the fireworks before they witnessed them in action.

"Upon my word, the major has provided most liberally for our entertainment!" exclaimed Mr Seymour, as he ascended the steps which led to the platform: "I declare there is a forest of *rockets!* and what magnificent *Pinwheels, Tourbillons, Marroons, Pots des Aigrettes, Gerbes, Courantines,* and *Roman Candles!*"

"Are those paper cylinders, with long sticks, rockets?" inquired Tom.

"They are; and if you will attend to me, I will explain the principle of their construction. They have ever been considered as holding the first place among single fireworks, and deservedly so; not only on account of the splendid appearance they present when fired by themselves, but from their extensive application in increasing the beauty of other exhibitions. The rocket, you perceive, consists of a strong paper cylinder, which is filled with a suitable composition; it is crowned with a head, or '*pot*,' as it is technically termed, charged with various materials, which throws out sparks, stars, and other decorations, as soon as it takes fire in the air, after the body of the rocket has been consumed. You may observe that the head is made to terminate in a point, which greatly facilitates its passage through the air. The whole is affixed to a straight stick."

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* See page 260

"But," observed Louisa, "all the rockets have not straight rods; see, there is one with a crooked stick."

"That is for the purpose of causing the rocket to ascend in the form of a screw: the first effect of the bent rod will be to make the rocket incline towards that side to which it is bent; but its centre of gravity bringing it afterwards into a vertical situation, the result of these two opposite efforts will be, that the rocket will ascend in a zigzag or spiral form. In this case, however, since it displaces a greater volume of air, and describes a longer line, it will not ascend so high as if it had been impelled in a straight direction."

"And what causes the rocket to ascend into the air?" asked Tom.

"It is a subject which has engaged the attention of several most distinguished philosophers; the explanation, however, afforded by Dr Hutton appears to me to be the most satisfactory. He says, 'that at the moment when the powder begins to inflame, its expansion produces a torrent of elastic fluid, which acts in every direction; that is, against the air which opposes its escape from the cartridge, and against the upper part of the rocket; but the resistance of the air is more considerable than the weight of the rocket, on account of the extreme rapidity with which the elastic fluid issues through the neck of the rocket to throw itself downwards, and therefore the rocket ascends by the excess of the one of these forces over the other.'"[*]

"Dr Hutton adds, that the rocket could not rise unless a sufficient quantity of elastic fluid were produced, and hence arose the expedient of piercing the rocket with a conical hole, so as to make the composition burn in conical strata, which, having much greater surface, produce a much greater quantity of inflamed matter and elastic fluid. Without such a contrivance the composition would inflame only in circular coats of a diameter equal to that of the rocket; and experience has shewn that this is not sufficient for the purpose. Some years ago a plan was suggested for producing the propulsion of a vessel in this way: by the force of a steam-engine a stream of water was to be shot out of the stern, the impulse of which upon the water in the river was to push forward the boat.[†] It is a curious fact, that nature has employed the same expedient for the motion of some aquatic insects. The larva of the dragon-fly, according to Adams, swims forward by ejecting water from its tail, and the *Nautilus*, which is erroneously believed to sail upon the surface of the sea, by the expansion of a membraneous sail, effects its progressive motion by ejecting, by means of a powerful muscle, through a tube or *siphunculus*, a stream of water with a very considerable momentum."

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[*] The measure of this propelling force will be as the pressure of the gas upon the area of the rocket's vent, multiplied into the velocity of the volume that escapes. In Hale's lately-invented "*War Rocket*" there are three or four lateral and tangential orifices for the escape of a small portion of the pent-up gas, which gives the rocket a rotatory motion on its long axis, which being coincident with its line of direction, thus *rifles* it.

[†] This principle is applied in the "*Deep-sea-fishing Steamer*," by what is called *Ruthven's Propeller*, which consists of a fan-wheel acted upon by the ejection of continuous streams, through pipes at the stern.

"What are those fireworks attached to the lines?" asked Tom.

"Those, my dear, are line-rockets, or *courantines*,* and which, instead of rising into the air, run along the line, to which they are attached by means of a hollow cylinder. Their motion is to be explained upon the same principle as that of the sky-rocket."

"That is clear enough," said Louisa; "but see, there is the figure of a dragon on yonder rope!"

"That is merely a runner for the courantine, which is constructed in that form for the purpose of rendering the exhibition more surprising. I dare say it is filled with various compositions such as golden rain, and fires of different colours, which will greatly heighten the effect; indeed, this pyrotechnic amusement may be infinitely varied."

"Are not those *pin-wheels*, which are elevated above the railing?" said Tom.

"Yes, they are pin or Catherine wheels; and if you will look at them, you will perceive that they are of very simple construction; consisting merely of a long paper tube, filled with inflammable matter, and rolled round a small circle of wood, so as to form a helix or spiral line."

"The circle of wood, I suppose, is pierced in the middle for the purpose of receiving a pin, by which the wheel is attached to the post," said Tom.

"Exactly so; and the cause of their revolution is the same as that which produces the flight of the rocket; the impulse of the air forces back the ignited part of the wheel, which generates, as it were, a centrifugal force, while the attachment of the pipe, by preventing its obeying such a force, may be said to represent the centripetal force; and thus is the revolution of the wheel continued, until the whole of the composition is consumed."

"I think you told us, when speaking of the thaumatrope,† it was the rapidity with which the flame revolved that occasioned the star-like appearance which is exhibited by this firework," observed Louisa.

"Undoubtedly, my dear; it cannot be otherwise."

The party now examined the remaining specimens of the pyrotechnic art. Mr Seymour informed them that *marroons* were nothing more than small cubical boxes, filled with a composition proper for making them burst, and thence producing a loud report. He said that they were principally used in combination with other pieces, or to form a battery, in which, by different lengths of quick match, they were made to explode at distinct intervals. Mr Seymour added, that when the cases were made cylindrical, instead of being cubical, they exchanged the name of marroon for that of *saucisson*. Louisa inquired the nature of certain cylindrical cases she observed on the stage, and was informed that they were *gerbes*—a species of firework which throws up a luminous and sparkling jet of fire, and, from a supposed resemblance to a water-spout, has derived the appellation of *gerbe*. Mr Seymour next pointed out to Tom a row of *Roman candles*, some of which were fixed perpendicularly, others inclining at different angles, so that the balls might be projected to various distances, and thus produce a more varied effect. He observed, that, to his taste, it was by far the most beautiful firework ever exhibited.

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* From the French term *courant*, signifying running.

† See page 284.

"I am quite impatient for the exhibition," cried Tom; "pray, what is the hour? I think it was determined to let them off at ten o'clock."

"It is now past eight; we will therefore return to the house; we shall, however, I suspect, have a curious sight to witness on our way through the fair; for by this time every booth is illuminated."

The scene was indescribably beautiful, and might be said to resemble an enchanted island. The trees were lighted up with an endless profusion of Chinese lanterns, of complementary colours, and decorated with fantastic transparencies, which produced an effect highly graceful and pleasing. The booths were richly studded with lights; and, near the platform, on which the villagers were enjoying the country dance, was erected a pyramid, which blazed with several hundred variegated lamps.

At ten o'clock the commencement of the fireworks was announced by a shower of rockets; and a thousand chamelion meteors sprang into existence. The music ceased; and the dancers, together with the spectators who had gathered around the platform, hastened to the spot, whither they were directed by these "gaudy spirits of the sky," to witness the pyrotechnic triumph which was to crown the festivities of the day.

"Observe, Louisa, the rocket as it ascends describes a parabola!"* cried Tom.

"Oh, how extremely beautiful! see, the head has burst, and is discharging a number of brilliant stars! What is that red spark which is now falling to the ground?"

"That is the ignited stick of the rocket," replied his father.

"Take care, Louisa, do not hold your face up," exclaimed Tom;

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* A scientific critic has offered the following just remark upon this passage:—"The rocket ascends by a constantly-acting force, not by a momentary impulse, as though it were shot from a gun. Supposing the force arising from combustion to be proportionate to the weight of the rocket, as long as the force continues to be generated, the rocket must move in a straight line; after which, having only its own momentum to oppose its gravitation, it will proceed in a parabolic curve."

"for as the rocket bursts over our heads, the stick may fall upon us."

"I scarcely expected such an observation, Tom," said his father, "after the sensible remark you just made respecting the parabolic path of the rocket; do not you remember, that, when a projectile has reached its greatest altitude, it will descend in a curve similar to that in which it ascended?"

"True, true," answered Tom; "I see my error: the stick must, of course, fall at a considerable distance from us."

"Look! look! There goes a *courantine!* how it ran along the rope!" exclaimed Louisa.

"There goes another!" cried Tom; "and see, it is the dragon; and I declare there is another running in an opposite direction;—they meet. Look at the serpents which they discharge from their mouths! Now they return to the extremity of the line with great violence. What an explosion!!!"

In like manner were next exhibited two ships, which, being filled with serpents, were made to pour their broadsides at each other.

"See—see, Louisa! what a large wheel of fire! and the figure of a man in the centre."

"A classical device of the vicar, beyond all doubt. It is Ixion on a wheel encompassed by hissing serpents," observed his father.*

This conjecture was soon verified, for the vicar, with his usual animation, was heard to exclaim—

"'. . . Tortosque Ixionis angues,
Immanemque rotam,'

as Virgil has it."

Another display of rockets succeeded, which burst forth in showers of golden tears, emerald stars, and ruby balls; many of which changed during their course into other colours, or discharged nests of fiery serpents.

(Bang)—(bang)—(bang)—

"There go the marroons," said Mr Seymour.

The band now struck up a march, and the major completely succeeded, by having arranged different lengths of quick match, in making them explode at appropriate intervals, so as to mark correctly the commencement of each bar of the music which was performing.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Mr Seymour; "had Handel witnessed such an effect, he would have engaged the major as a performer in his grand choruses."

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* At a fête given at the Observatory, Campden Hill, Kensington, on the 4th of July 1849, in honour of the birthday of the Earl of Rosse, the liberal host, Sir James South, amongst a variety of pyrotechnic devices, exhibited the above piece, at the suggestion of the author, with very considerable success.

"See! what a beautiful fountain of fire—there! now a most brilliant star is ejected!"—

"It is a Roman candle," said Mr Seymour.

A variety of different rockets were next exploded; such as "*Towering* rockets," so called from their ascending to a greater height than any others; an effect which is produced by fixing a smaller rocket on the top of another of superior dimensions; "*Honorary* rockets," which, when they attain their greatest height, communicate fire to other rockets affixed to them in a transverse direction, and thus produce a rapid revolution, and represent, on their return to the ground, a spiral of descending fire; "*Caduceus* rockets," so called from their resemblance, when in action, to the rod borne by Mercury: the effect is produced by firing two rockets obliquely on the opposite sides of a rod, so that they may form in their flight two spiral lines; and "*Shell* rockets," which, like the arrow of Acestes, suddenly kindled into light as they passed rapidly through the air.*

The major here observed that no weapon so terrifies savages as rockets.

The beautiful effect of Coloured Fires was next displayed; red and green being those selected for the sake of contrast. To succeed in this exhibition it is essential that it should take place amidst shrubs and trees, and that the immediate source of the light should be most carefully concealed; it is the reflection alone that lends enchantment to the scene; should the spectators gain, only for a moment, a sight of the burning mass, the spell is dissolved. The company were accordingly directed to proceed to a different part of the grounds, where this important condition could be fulfilled. The red fire was first displayed, by which every herb, shrub, and tree glowed with an intense colour. An illusion so magical acted upon the sensitive imagination of the vicar, and called forth from the depths of his classical reminiscences various quotations descriptive of the realms of Tartarus; while the greeen light which succeeded, after a sufficient interval to allow the eye to recover its just perception, transported him, in imagination at least, from penal regions to those that were regarded as the brighter abodes of happy spirits—the "*locos lætos et amœna vireta*" of Virgil.

The major and Mr Seymour, although they played upon his singularities, were anxious, on every occasion, to gratify the classical humour of the vicar, and had, accordingly, arranged for him a very agreeable surprise; it was a *Tableau*, in which the shade of the unhappy Dido was seen gliding through the wood, and refusing to recognise the advances of her earthly lover. The unearthly green hue cast upon the figure went far to realise the spectral form of the poet's imagination, while the parts of Dido and Æneas were admirably sustained by Mrs Beacham and her husband.

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* Æn. l. v.

The entertainment of the evening concluded with what pyrotechnics call "*a set piece;*" it was a Catherine-wheel of imposing size and splendour, repeatedly changing its form and devices, and finally discharging a shower of rockets. The dense volume of smoke which followed gradually cleared off, and the appropriate motto, "FAREWELL!" appeared in sparkling letters of ruby light.

In a few minutes the populace separated, and were on their respective roads home, when a large rocket ascended, and, bursting over their heads, discharged a parachute, to which was attached a brilliant light: eight similar rockets followed, and, by ingeniously varying the direction and angle, the major contrived to launch the floating luminaries in the form of a crown or circle, each alternately changing its colour from red to blue, and thus imparting to the landscape the ruddy hue of the setting sun, or the milder radiance of a mellow moonlight.

"Charming—most charming!" exclaimed the delighted vicar; "why, my dear major," continued he, in the same tone of enthusiasm, "your prolific ingenuity divests even a parting scene of its accompanying gloom,

'Et noctem flammis funalia vincunt,'

as the immortal poet has it."

To which the major replied, that he did but obey the precept of Homer *—

"WELCOME THE COMING, SPEED THE PARTING GUEST."

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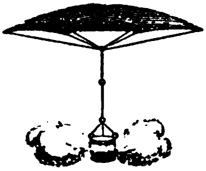
* Odyss., Book 15.



EXPLANATORY AND SUPPLEMENTARY

NOTES;

ADDRESSED MORE ESPECIALLY TO

PARENTS AND PRECEPTORS,

AND TO

THOSE ADVANCED IN SCIENCE.

EXPLANATORY AND SUPPLEMENTARY

NOTES,

REFERRED TO BY FIGURES IN THE TEXT.

NOTE 1, p. 3.

The Horologe of Flora.

> "Thus in each flower and simple bell,
> That in our path betrodden lie,
> Are sweet remembrancers who tell
> How fast the winged moments fly."

THE HOROLOGE OF FLORA is alluded to by Pliny with his usual felicity of thought and expression:—"Dedi tibi herbas horarum indices; et ut ne sole quidem oculos tuos a terra avoces, heliotropium ac lupinum circumaguntur cum illo. Cur etiam altius spectas, ipsumque cœlum scrutaris? Habes ante pedes tuos ecce Vergilias."—*Hist. Nat.*, lib. xviii. c. 27.

Linnæus enumerates forty-six flowers which possess this kind of sensibility. The following are a few of them, with their respective hours of rising and setting, as the Swedish naturalist terms them. He divides them into—

1st. *Meteoric* flowers, which less accurately observe the hour of unfolding, but are expanded sooner or later, according to the cloudiness, moisture, or pressure of the atmosphere.

2d. *Tropical* flowers, which open in the morning, and close before evening every day; but the hour of the expanding becomes earlier or later, as the length of the day increases or decreases.

3d. *Equinoctial* flowers, which serve for the construction of Flora's dial, since they open at a certain and exact hour of the day, and for the most part close at another determinate hour: for instance, the *Leontodon taraxacum*, dandelion, opens at 5-6, closes at 8–9; *Hieracium pilosella*, mouse-ear hawkweed, opens at 8, closes at 2; *Tragopogon pratense*, yellow goat's-beard, opens at sunrise, and shuts at noon with such regularity, that the husbandman who adopts it as the signal of dinner-time need not fear to have his pudding too much or too little boiled; *Sonchus lævis*, smooth sow-thistle, opens at 5, closes at 11–12; *Lactuca sativa*, cultivated lettuce, opens at 7, closes at 10; *Tragopogon luteus*, yellow goat's-beard, opens at 3–5, closes at 9–10; *Lapsana*, nipplewort, opens at 5–6, closes at 10–11; *Nymphæa alba*, white water-lily, opens at 7, closes at 5; *Papaver nudicaule*, naked popy, opens at 5, closes at 7; *Hemerocallis fulva*, tawny day-lily, opens at 5, closes at 7–8; *Convolvulus*, opens at 5–6; *Malva*, mallow, opens at 9–10, closes at 1; *Arenaria purpurea*, purple sandwort, opens at 9–10, closes at 2–3; *Anagallis*, pimpernel, opens at 7–8; *Portulaca hortensis*, garden purslain, opens at 9–10, closes at 11–12; *Dianthus prolifer*, proliferous pink, opens at 8, closes at 1; *Cichoreum*, succory, opens at 4–5; *Hypocharis* opens at 6–7, closes at 4–5; *Crepis* opens at 4–5, closes at 10–11; *Picris* opens at 4–5, closes at 12; *Calendula Africana* opens at 7, closes at 3–4, &c.

In like manner may be formed a *calendar* of Flora: thus, if we consider the time of putting forth leaves, the *honeysuckle* protrudes them in the month of January; the *gooseberry*, *currant*, and *elder* in the end of February, or beginning of April; the *oak* and *ash* in the beginning, or towards the middle, of May, &c.

Notwithstanding the injunction implied in the quotation of Pliny at the head of the present note, we shall venture to direct the gaze of our readers to the northern pole of the sky—"*peters* *auxilium celeste*"—whenever the sun fails to cast its tell-tale shadow on the dial; for in that region may be seen old Time pointing his finger to the hour of the day, even though the sun be below the horizon! Is it not passing strange that there should have existed, ever since the creation of the solar system, a never-failing chronometer telegraphing time, by a process unsuspected by man, until the keen eye of Science detected its working, and enabled him to recognise and interpret its signals? We must here take for granted that the reader is already acquainted with the nature of *polarized light*, for the subject is far too large to be discussed, or even enunciated in the compass of a note. Suffice it to say that from the disposition of the polarized beams of reflected light, as they stream from the northern sky, we can accurately infer the position of the sun, and consequently the hour of the day. To determine this, Mr Wheatstone has invented an optical instrument termed the *Polar Clock*, by which the plane of polarization can be easily ascertained. To those acquainted with the theory of polarization it will be evident that, since the sun, in its apparent daily course, moves equably in a circle round the north pole, so must the planes of polarization change their position exactly as the hour-circles change. A description of this ingenious instrument is to be found in the *Report of the* 18*th Meeting of the British Association held at Swansea in* 1848. In this note we only profess to direct attention to the subject.

NOTE 2, p. 4.

Geological Theories—Fire and Water.

The geologist of the present day can scarcely imagine the uncompromising and intolerant spirit with which the partisans of the *Igneous* and *Aqueous* theories of the earth carried on their controversy during the earlier part of the present century. Edinburgh, originally the cradle, became the arena of the combatants. The Wernerians, or "*Neptunists*," as they were called, affirmed that the earth was indebted for its present form and arrangement to the sole agency of water; and thus, as Shakspeare says, "made a sop of all this solid globe;" the Huttonians, or "*Plutonists*," on the contrary, although they admitted to a certain extent the operation of water, maintained the utter impossibility of explaining the consolidation of the strata without the intervention of fire; every geologist felt bound to side with one or the other of these contending parties, for neutrality was held as disgraceful as though the law of Solon had been in active operation.

Fire and water, in philosophical systems, as well as in poetical fables, had ever maintained an unmitigated hostility, until Chemistry stepped in as umpire to adjust their claims and settle their differences. This science soon determined that there did not really exist that antagonism which was so universally believed, but that water contained an element of fire, and fire an element of water, thus realising the prodigy in Livy—"*Unda dabit flammas, et dabit ignis aquas.*"

When water was thus violently assailed by the geologic Plutonist, and driven, as it were, by a flaming sword from the rocky strata, it sought shelter and refuge in their imbedded crystals, and became, in its turn, the assailant. To quote the words of one of the most inflexible and eloquent disciples of Werner, the late Dr Clarke of Cambridge, "the water in the crystals of my cabinet is more than sufficient to extinguish all the fires of the Plutonist." This Quixotic attack upon his adversaries reminds us of the amusing old Pagan fable. The Persian and Egyptian priests of the gods of fire and water agreed upon a duel between their principals. The aquatic champion was clad, for armour, in a jug bored with holes stopped with wax. Flame advanced with all the fervour of his element; Neptune received the onset with *sang froid:* Flame rushed on, the wax dissolved, an inundation burst forth, and Flame was subdued and extinguished.

Hence the origin of the deified Pitcher (*Canopus*) common on the coins of Egypt—it being a human head placed upon a kind of pitcher. But since these early days of geological speculation, the science has lost its wildness of romance, and fallen into the ranks of inductive philosophy; and even those apparently fortuitous elevations and depressions, which diversify the surface of the globe, promise submission to a dynamic law which will ultimately, no doubt, reduce the whole to order and system.

NOTE 3, p. 15.

Göthe an early but intelligent "Destructive."

"From my earliest years I felt a love for the investigation of natural things. It is often regarded as an instinct of cruelty, that children like, at last, to break, tear, and devour objects with which for a long time they played, and which they have handled in various manners; and yet even in this way is manifested the curiosity, the desire of learning how such things hang together—how they look within. I remember that, as a child, I pulled flowers to pieces to see how the leaves were inserted into the calyx; or even plucked birds to observe how the feathers were inserted into the wings.

"Children are not to be blamed for this, when even our naturalists believe they get their knowledge oftener by separation and division than by union and combination—more by killing than by making alive." —*Autobiography of Göthe.*

NOTE 4, p. 23.

Weight of the Earth and the Planets.

> "Th' Eternal hung forth His golden scales,
> Wherein all things created first He weighed."
> MILTON.

The startling fact announced in the text, that the astronomer is not only able to measure the Earth and Planets, but to ascertain the weight, or gravitating force of each, is due to the wonderful discovery of universal gravitation; which enables him to infer, from the revolution of the satellites round their primary planets, a measure of the force by which they are retained in their orbits, and, consequently, a measure of the quantity of gravitating matter, of which each planet consists.

The planets differ greatly in magnitude: for example, the diameter of the earth is 8000 miles; that of Jupiter, 88,000; of Saturn, 75,000; and since the volumes, or bulks of globes, are in the proportion of the cubes of their diameters, it follows that the bulk of Jupiter is 1300 times that of the earth, while that of Saturn is 857 times; but we are now only speaking of magnitude, let us next consider the question of density. With regard to Jupiter, we are at once assisted by comparing the velocity of the moon's revolution round the earth with that of one of Jupiter's satellites, when we find that, bulk for bulk, the matter composing Jupiter is lighter than that of the earth in the ratio of 1 to 4; in fact, that it is only a little heavier than water. Venus and Mars would appear to be 5·5 times heavier than water, being nearly of the same density as that of the earth; whereas Mercury has the specific weight of gold. Uranus and Neptune would seem to have the density of water; while Saturn is lighter than water, and would float in it like a piece of pine wood; nor does the sun exceed that of water; and yet it by no means follows that these light bodies exist in a fluid form. Sir David Brewster observes, that there are many solid bodies, and even some minerals, as pumice, and even the metals of the alkalis, of less specific gravity than water. Now this, with other inquiries relating to magnitude, distance, heat, and light, variation of seasons, length of the year, and other physical conditions, have an important bearing upon a question which has lately excited considerable discussion—that of the PLURALITY OF WORLDS—involving speculations regarding the physical adaptation of the planets, as the abodes of intellectual life, or of inhabitants to be regarded as the equivalents of the human race: and first, as to the gravitating influence of such large bodies upon animals moving on their surfaces. Independent of the influence of density, magnitude will considerably diminish the weight of any body on the surface of a planet; thus it is apparent that the larger the globe, the farther removed must be any body on its surface from its centre, in the proportion of the square of the distance. Let us illustrate this proposition by an appeal to Jupiter: the volume of that planet has been stated at 1300 times that of the earth; but a body on its surface is eleven times farther removed from its centre, and would therefore be attracted with a less force, in the ratio of the square of eleven, *i.e.*, of 121 to 1; the necessary consequence of which will be that a body on its surface must weigh eleven times more than upon the earth; but we have just said that the matter of Jupiter has a density scarcely exceeding that of water; and hence we have farther to reduce our estimate, and instead of being eleven times, a body on its surface would only be 2¾ heavier than on our earth; and, therefore, physically speaking, the excessive amount of gravitation would not, as it has been argued, so fatally militate against the possibility of animal existence. Besides, is not adaptation, the paramount law of creation? and what evidence is there to show that intelligence bears any relation to weight or measure? We need not the poetical fancy of Milton to people these globes with forms adapted to the exigencies of their several abodes; it is by no means essential that they should be, like the denizens of earth,

> "Ty'd or manacled with joint or limb,
> Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
> Like cumbrous flesh."

With this passing notice we commit our readers to the safe keeping of Sir David Brewster.*

NOTE 5, p. 27.

Gravity and Centrifugal Force.

It may, perhaps, be asked how this decrease of weight could have been ascertained: since, if the body under examination decreased in weight, the weight which was opposed to it in the opposite scale must also have diminished in the same proportion; for instance, that, if the lump of lead lost two pounds, the body which served to balance it must also have lost the same weight, and therefore that the different force of gravity could not be detected by such means. It is undoubtedly true that the experiment in question could not have been performed with an ordinary pair of scales; but by using a spiral spring it was easy to compare the force of the lead's gravity at the surface of the earth, and at four miles high, by the relative degree of compression which it sustained in those different situations.

With respect to the effect of the centrifugal force, as alluded to in the text, it may be here observed, that it has been found by calculation that, at the equator, the diminution of gravity occasioned by the centrifugal force arising from the rotation of the earth amounts to about the 289th part. But since this number is the square of seventeen, it follows that, if our globe turned more than seventeen times faster about her axis, or performed the diurnal revolution within the space of eighty-four minutes, the centrifugal force would predominate over the powers of gravitation, and all the fluid and loose matters would, near the equinoctial boundary, have been projected from the surface. On such a supposition the waters of the ocean must have been drained off, and an impassable zone of sterility interposed between the opposite hemispheres. By a similar calculation, combined with that decreasing force of gravity at great distances from the centre, it may be inferred that the altitude of our atmosphere could never exceed 26,000 miles. Beyond this limit, the equatorial portion of air would have been shot into indefinite space. If it were possible to fire off a cannon-ball with a velocity of five miles in a second, and the resistance of the air could be taken away, it would for ever wheel round the earth, instead of falling upon it; and supposing the velocity to reach the rate of seven miles in a second, the ball would fly off from the earth, and be never heard of more.

NOTE 6, p. 29.

Velocity of Light.

"THE STARS AND THE EARTH."

> "How distant some of these nocturnal Suns!
> So distant, says the sage, 'twere not absurd
> To doubt if beams, set out at Nature's birth,
> Are yet arrived at this so foreign world."
>
> Young's *Night Thoughts*, N. ix.

It is scarcely possible so to strain the imagination as to conceive the velocity with which light travels. "What mere assertion," asks Sir J. Herschel, "will make any man believe that in one second of time—in one beat of the pendulum of a clock—a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles, and would, therefore, perform the tour of the world in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less than a swift runner occupies in taking a single stride!"

Were a cannon-ball, shot directly towards the sun, to retain its full speed, it would be twenty years in reaching it, and yet light travels through this space, not less than a hundred million of miles, in seven or eight minutes. It is only by thus bringing velocity into comparison with time and space that the human mind can grapple with a subject that startles the imagination by the vastness of the conception it inspires, while it arouses our reasoning faculties to the consciousness of the momentous questions involved in its examination. From the moon, which is distant from us

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* "*More Worlds than One; the Creed of the Philosopher, and the Hope of the Christian*," by Sir David Brewster, K.H., D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.

240,000 miles, its light will occupy in its passage to the earth about a second and a quarter of our time; from Jupiter, 617,000,000 miles distant, fifty-two minutes; and from Uranus, 1,800,000,000 from us, not less than two hours: but if these numbers startle the reader, what will he say when, quitting the confines of the solar system, we penetrate the infinite wilderness of space, and tell him that from the nearest fixed star, that, for example, which is the brightest in the constellation, *Centaury*, its light will require three years to reach the earth; from *Vega*, of the *Lyre*, twelve years; and from a star in the twelfth magnitude, no less than 4000 years! during which period this subtle emanation, or "*light wave*," must have flowed through space, on its own account, unconnected with its original source;[*] and, therefore, by seeing these stars, we only receive information of their visible condition; not what it is at present, but what it was some thousand years ago, when they sent forth their light on its infinite journey; so that, for aught we know or can tell, stars may have been created coeval with man, and yet their light may not yet have reached us; and stars may have been extinguished for many thousand years, and may still continue visible to us by means of the light emitted before their extinction, and which may continue to shine for centuries to come! What a subject for the exercise of the imagination![†]

The first question, however, which very naturally suggests itself, is as to the nature of that force or impulse which we call light—is it matter *sui generis?*—or is it a transcendental condition of matter? Now two theories have been advanced for its explanation—the one known as the Newtonian, or that of *emission*, as it is called; the other, the undulatory theory. The former regards light as consisting of myriads of material particles, emitted by luminous bodies; the latter maintains that there is no inactive void in creation, but that space is filled up by an "*ether*," penetrable by attractive forces, by which the universe is held together, and that the *waves of this ether form light*. This latter theory now prevails; since it has been found that, during the progress of optical discoveries, the former is wholly inadequate to meet their requirements, viz., the great class of phenomena of *diffraction* and *polarization;* but we must here again refer the reader to our Mentor, Sir David Brewster.[*]

The astronomer, placed on our puny globe, looks up at the stars, watches their motions, speculates upon their distances, foreshadows their destinies, and is lost in wonder. With the indulgence of the reader, as the pastime of an hour, or as "Philosophy in Sport," if it so please him to regard it, we will reverse the telescope and the prospect; and instead of gazing upon these gems of the heavens, like mortals from the earth, let us avail ourselves of the imaginary wings of the poet, "soar the blue profound, and look back upon all the stars." If it be admitted that some hundred years may be required to convey the light of a star to the earth, it is obvious that the same period must be relatively occupied by the transit of the earth's light to any star on which fancy might place us. This converse proposition has been adopted, and very ingeniously worked out by an anonymous author, in a short essay, entitled, "*The Stars and the Earth*,"[†] and we are anxious to bring it to the notice of the reader, as one of those bright bubbles that frequently rise up, during the effervescence of an ingenious mind, and which, like those of the well, may indicate the presence of truth at its bottom. The author calls upon us to admit certain postulates, viz.,—That force is never lost—that the powers of vision are illimitable—and that the word *possible* is to denote whatever does not contradict the laws of thought. If, then, we can imagine a being, with the same powers as those possessed by man, but on an enlarged scale, not differing in kind, but in degree, an earthly deed or occurrence, even after thousands of years, might, from a star of appropriate distance, that is to say, from a point at which the light and the reflection of the circumstance is just arriving, be distinctly seen as actually taking place before his eyes; and were he, like Milton's Raphael, with "incorporeal speed," to pass from star to star, he might recall sensibly to his very eyes an actual and true representation of every moment of past history. If, for instance, he wished to see the crucifixion, he would select a star which would require the necessary lapse of time to bring the light of the earth to his eyes. Let us imagine an observer, with infinite powers of vision, in a star of the twelfth magnitude. He would see the earth at this moment, as it existed in the time of Abraham; and if we farther imagine him to be moved forward in the direction of our earth, with such speed that, in the course of an hour, he would come to within the distance of 100,000,000 of miles, then in the eye of such an observer would be seen the entire history of the world, from the time of Abraham to the present day; for when the motion commenced, he viewed the earth as it was four thousand years ago; at the half-way, *i.e.*, after half-an-hour, as it was two thousand years ago; and so on.

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[*] The author of "The Stars and the Earth" has fallen into an obvious fallacy when he states that "the moon rises above the horizon a second and a quarter before she becomes visible to us." It is the *stream*, not the *source* that enlightens us, and that has been uninterruptedly flowing, and falls upon the earth the moment it turns towards it.

[†] The ancient philosophers would appear to have entertained a curious estimate as to the distance of the heavenly bodies. We find it stated in the "Theogony" of Hesiod that, such is the height of the heavens, a smith's anvil would be nine days in falling thence to the earth.

[*] "A Treatise on Optics," &c.

[†] "*The Stars and the Earth; or, Thoughts upon Space, Time, and Eternity.*"—Bailliere, Regent Street, and New York. *Price One Shilling.*

The geologist, so circumstanced, might solve the great problem of the earth's mutation, for he would see the successive formations in actual progress; mountains rising up from the deep, continents giving place to seas, and all the phenomena of geological revolution, like changing scenery in a pantomime: but we desist—the curious reader must refer to the essay itself, for although its ingenious author has abolished the impediments of time and space, we find ourselves unable to take advantage of the discovery.

NOTE 7, p. 31.

Hydromancy.

This superstition still prevails in many parts of England, especially in Cornwall, where the peasants on certain days of the year assemble at the springs, or holy wells, and, in the manner stated in the text, proceed to settle such doubts and inquiries as will not let the idle and anxious rest. Here, therefore they come, and instead of allaying, deservedly feed their uneasiness; the supposed responses serving equally to increase the gloom of the low-spirited, the suspicions of the jealous, and the passion of the enamoured. The superstition, however, is sanctioned by the highest antiquity. The Castalian fountain, and many others among the Grecians, were supposed to be of a prophetic nature. By dipping a fair mirror into a well, the Patreans of Greece received, as they supposed, some notice of ensuing sickness or health from the various figures portrayed upon the surface. In Laconia they cast into a pool, sacred to Juno, cakes of bread-corn; if they sank, good was portended, if they swam, something dreadful was to ensue. Sometimes they threw three stones into the water, and formed their conclusions from the several turns they made in sinking. "From the several waves and eddies which the sea, river, or other water exhibited," says Dr Borlase, "when put into agitation after a ritual manner, the ancients pretended to foretell with great certainty the event of battles; a way of divining recorded by Plutarch in his life of Cæsar, and still usual among the vulgar in Cornwall; who go to some noted well at particular times of the year, and there observe the bubbles that rise, and the aptness of the water to be troubled, or to remain pure, on their throwing in pins or pebbles, and thence conjecture what shall or shall not befall them. The Druids, also, as we have great reason to think, pretended to predict future events, not only from holy wells and running streams, but from the rain and snow water, which, when settled, and afterwards stirred, either by oak-leaf or branch, or magic wand, might exhibit appearances of great information to the quick-sighted Druid, or seem so to do to the credulous inquirer, when the priest was at full liberty to represent the appearances as he thought most for his purpose."—BORLASE'S "*Antiquities of Cornwall,*" p. 143.

In the islands of Scilly there is, or was some years since, a custom of propitiating fortune by certain ceremonies of this kind. An old islander regretted to a friend of the author the want of care with which such ceremonies had of late been conducted, and observed, as the consequence, that "*they had no luck at all in the islands; not a wreck had taken place for many months!*"

NOTE 8, p. 34.

Coins and Medals.

The Latin word *moneta*, for money,

is probably more modern than *pecunia*, and is said to be derived from *moneo*, to advise or mark, that is, to show by some mark the weight and fineness of the metal of which coins were composed. Thus, according to Isidorus, "Moneta ita appellatur, quia monet ne qua fraus in pondere vel metallo fiat." The origin of money seems to have been coeval with the first regulations of civil society, or, at least, it is too remote to be traced by any authentic history. Barter—that is, the exchange of one commodity for another—was the ordinary mode of traffic in the earlier periods of the world; a practice which must soon have been discovered extremely inconvenient, and inadequate to the purposes of commerce; and hence the invention of a common measure, or standard, according to which all other things should be estimated. Writers very generally agree in believing that the metals were first used for such a purpose, as being almost the only substances whose goodness, and, as it were, integrity, were not injured by partition; and which admitted of being melted, and returned again into a mass of any size or weight. At first, it is probable that each person cut his metal into pieces of different sizes and forms, according to the quantity to be given for any merchandise, or according to the demand of the seller, or the quantity stipulated between them. To this end they went to market laden with metal in proportion to the purchase to be made, and furnished with instruments for apportioning it, and with scales for dealing it out, according as occasion required. By degrees it must have been found commodious to have pieces ready weighed; and Mr Pinkerton observes, that such were prepared without any stated form or impression, but merely regulated to a certain weight: for *weight* was the grand standard of ancient coinage, so that all large sums were paid in weight, even down to the Saxon period of England. As in Greece the first estimation of money was merely by weight, so was it in Rome. Silver was the metal first used in Grecian coinage, but copper in the Roman. The first valuation of Roman money was by the *libra gravis æris*, or pound of heavy brass: and when by the progress of their conquests they obtained silver and gold, these were regulated in the same manner. Let us proceed one step farther in the history of coins;[*] it is easy to imagine that, the growing commerce of money being disturbed with frauds, both in the weight and the material, the interposition of public authority became necessary, and that hence arose the first stamps or impressions of money: to which succeeded the names of the moneyers, and at length the effigy of the prince, the date, legend, and other precautions to prevent the alteration of the species; and thus were coins completed. Gold and silver in their pure or unmixed state are too flexible to make coins sufficiently firm for general use; and hence the necessity of mixing with them a certain proportion of some harder metal, and this mixture is called the *alloy*. The quality of this alloy has been always considered of great importance with respect to the durability of coins. The most common metal used for this purpose is copper; and sometimes, for gold, a mixture of silver and copper. In all well-regulated governments there has been a standard fixed by law; that is, a certain proportion between the quantity of pure metal and its alloy. In England the standard of gold is 11–12ths, that is eleven parts of pure metal, and one part of alloy. The standard for silver is 37–40ths, a proportion which is said to have been fixed in the reign of Richard I. by certain persons from the eastern parts of Germany, called *Easterlings;* and hence the word *Sterling*, which was afterwards the name given to the silver penny, and which is now applied to all lawful money of Great Britain.

Penny is derived by Camden from *pecunia*, but others suppose that the word is formed from *pendo*, to weigh, and the word has been sometimes written, according to this origin, *pending*. The ancient English penny, or penig, or pening, was the first silver coin struck in England, and the only one current amongst our Saxon ancestors. Until the time of Edward I. the penny was struck with a cross so deeply indented in it, that it might be easily broken, and parted into two pieces, thence called *half-pennies*, or into four, called *four-things*, or *farthings*; but that prince coined it without indenture; in lieu of which he first struck round halfpence and farthings.

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[*] The word COIN is derived from κοινὸς, *common*, or *current*. Some have derived it from *Cuneus*, a wedge, because metal is cut in wedges to be coined. In Cornwall there are "*Coinage Towns*," wherein the tin, brought from the smelting-house, is assayed and then stamped, to certify its purity. The process consists in cutting off a *corner* (coigne) of the block as a sample, hence the term coin. Thus Shakspeare, "See you yond' *coin* o' the capitol, yond' *corner* of stone?"

By the term MEDAL we understand a piece of metal, in the form of a coin, destined to preserve to posterity the portrait of some great man, or the memory of some illustrious action. They are distinguished by their different sizes. Those of the larger size, or volume are called *medallions*. *Medallet* is a name given by Pinkerton to those small pieces, or *missilia*, scattered among the people on solemn occasions; those struck for the slaves in the Saturnalia, private counters for gaming, tickets for baths and feasts, tokens in copper and lead, and the like. Medallions were certainly never intended to become current coin, as some medals probably were; they were struck purely to serve as public monuments, or to be presented by the emperor to his friends, and by the mint-makers to the emperor, as specimens of fine workmanship. They were struck upon the commencement of the reign of a new emperor, and other solemn occasions; and frequently, especially the Greek medallions, as monuments of gratitude or of flattery. Sometimes they were trial or pattern pieces, *testimonia probatæ monetæ;* and such abound after the reign of Maximilian, with the "Tres monatæ" on the reverse. It is observed that all the Roman pieces in gold, exceeding the *denarius aureus;* all in silver, superior to the *denarius;* and all in brass, superior to the *sestertius*, or what the medallist terms large brass, are comprehended under the description of medallions. Mr Pinkerton, however, thinks that the gold medallions, weighing two, three, or four aurei only, passed in currency according to their size. Medallions from the time of Julius to that of Adrian are very uncommon, and of very high price; from Adrian to the close of the western empire they are, generally speaking, less rare. The types of the Roman medallions are often repeated upon common coin; hence they appear of less importance than the Greek; impressions of which are frequently most uncommon, and nowhere else to be found. Many Roman medallions have S. C., as being struck by order of the senate; those without these initials were struck by order of the emperor. Of Augustus, a noble medallion was found in Herculaneum. There are medallions of Augustus and Tiberius, struck in Spain; and one of Livia, at Patræ in Achaia; one in brass, of Antony and Cleopatra; reverse, two figures in a car, drawn by sea-horses. Of Tiberius there are many; and also of Claudius, Agrippina, Nero, Galba, Vespasian, and Domitian, &c. The Greek medallions of Roman emperors are far more numerous than the Roman; with a few exceptions, however, all medallions are rare and of princely purchase. Even in the richest cabinet, twenty or thirty specimens are esteemed a respectable proportion.

The parts of a medal are the two sides, one whereof is called the *face*, *head*, or obverse; the other the *reverse*. On each side is the *area*, or *field;* the *rim*, or *border;* and the *exergum*, which is beneath the ground, whereon the figures represented are placed. On the two sides are distinguished the *type* and the *inscription*, or *legend*. The type, or device, is the figure represented; the legend is the writing, especially that around the medal; though in the Greek medals the inscription is frequently on the area. What we find in the exergum is, generally, no more than some initial letters, whose meaning we are usually unacquainted with; though sometimes they contain words that may be accounted an inscription.

The exergum sometimes contains the date of the coin, expressing in what consulship of the emperor it was struck, as Cos. III. upon the reverse of an Antoninus. Sometimes it signifies the place where it was struck, and to which the coin properly belonged; as S. M. AL., for *Signata Moneta Alexandriæ*, upon the reverse of a Licinius: sometimes the name of a province, the reduction of which the medal is designed to celebrate; as Judæa on the reverse of a Vespasian. Medals usually have their figures in a higher relief than coins.

We have stated that medals are of great importance to the study of history. They, indeed, furnish the principal proof of historic truth, as their evidence reaches to the most remote ages, as well as to the most remote countries. Vaillant, in his learned history of the Syrian kings, printed at Paris, 1681, first fixed the dates, and arranged the order of events, in ancient historians, by means of these infallible vouchers. Thus he was enabled to ascertain the chronology and progress of events of three of the most important kingdoms of the ancient world; viz., those of Egypt, of Syria, and of Parthia. The study of the Roman medals has in this respect an advantage over that of Greek coins, since they serve not only to illustrate the chronology of reigns, but to aid us in the interpretation of particular events. To this purpose, besides the portrait of the prince, and date of his consulship or of his tribunitian power, we have a representation, or poetical symbol, of some grand event on the reverse. In a word, the series of Roman coins presents the very best suite of documents relating to the Roman history. In addition to its historical importance, the medal is frequently a useful guide to geography, natural history, architecture, ancient monuments, busts, statues, ceremonies, and the like. See Addison's "Dialogues on the Usefulness of Ancient Medals." On this subject, also, Pinkerton, in his valuable work on medals, has some interesting remarks; he says that, to a man of poetical imagination, the Roman coins must prove an ample source of intellectual delight, by means of the fine personifications and symbols which are to be found on their reverse. *Happiness* has sometimes the caduceus, or wand of Mercury, which Cicero tells us was thought to procure the gratification of every wish. In a gold coin of Severus, she has heads of poppy, to express that our prime bliss lies in oblivion of misfortune. *Hope* is represented as a sprightly damsel, walking quickly and looking straight forward. With her left hand she holds up her garments, that they may not hinder the rapidity of her pace; while in her right hand she holds forth the bud of a flower, an emblem infinitely more beautiful than the trite one of an anchor, which is the symbol of Patience, not of Hope. *Abundance* is imaged as a sedate matron, with a cornucopia in her hands, of which she scatters the fruits over the ground; but does not hold it up, and keep its contents to herself, as many poets and painters have represented her. *Security* stands leaning on a pillar, indicative of her being free from all designs and pursuits; and the posture itself corresponds to her name.

Coins also present us with countries and rivers admirably personified. On the reverse of a colonial coin, rude in execution, of Augustus and Agrippa, inscribed IMP. and DIVI. F., the conquest of Egypt is represented by the apposite metaphor of the crocodile, an animal almost peculiar to that country, and at that period esteemed altogether so, which is chained to a palm-tree, at once a native of the country, and symbolic of victory. Moreover, a cabinet of medals, of which Rubens is said to have possessed a very magnificent one, may be considered as forming the classic erudition of a painter. We may add, that almost all the uses which connect the science of medals with painting render it also subservient to the art of the sculptor, who cannot less than profit by the study of the Greek coins in particular. The connection of the study of ancient coins with architecture consists in the views of many of the ancient edifices, which are found in perfect preservation on medals. Froelich observes that the coins of Tarsus are very remarkable for a kind of perspective in the figures. On others are found triumphal arches, temples, fountains, aqueducts, amphitheatres, circuses, palaces, columns, obelisks, baths, seaports, pharoses, and the like.

The study of medals affords such a variety of amusement and of instruction, that we may naturally suppose it to be nearly as ancient as medals themselves; and yet ancient writers do not furnish us with a single hint of collections of this kind. In the days of Greece a collection of such coins as then existed would not be regarded as an acquisition of any great value, because it must have consisted only of those that were struck by the innumerable little states which then used the Greek characters and language, and of course it would be considered as a kind of domestic coinage, precluded from extension by the narrow limits of the intercourse that subsisted between different provinces and countries. As soon as any communication was opened between the Romans and the Greeks, the Grecian coins were imitated by the Roman workmen, and preserved in the cabinets of their senators among the choicest treasures. In a more advanced period of the Roman empire, individuals must have formed collections of Roman coins, for we find that a complete series of silver was lately found in our island, containing inclusively all the emperors down to Carausius. From the decline of the Roman empire, most branches of science were enveloped in darkness till the revival of letters towards the end of the fifteenth century. When literature began to be cultivated in Italy, the study of medals, connected with that of ancient erudition, also began to engage attention. Accordingly Petrarch, who in modern times was amongst the first persons in Europe that aspired to the celebrity of learning and genius, was likewise the first to revive the study of medals. This eminent man, having been desired by the Emperor Charles IV. to compose a book that should contain a history of the coins of illustrious men, and to place him in the list, is said to have returned for answer, that he would comply with his desire whenever the emperor's future life and actions deserved it. Availing himself of this circumstance, he sent that monarch a collection of gold and silver coins of celebrated men. "Behold," said he, "to what men you have succeeded! Behold whom you should imitate and admire! to whose very form and image you should compose your talents! The invaluable present I should have given to no one but yourself; it was due to you alone. I can only know or describe the deeds of these great men; your supreme office enables you to imitate them." In the next age, Alphonso, king of Arragon, caused all the ancient coins that could be discovered throughout the provinces of Italy to be collected, which he placed in an ivory cabinet, and always carried about with him, that he might be excited to great actions by the presence, as it were, of so many illustrious men in their images.

To those who are desirous of gaining information upon this interesting branch of antiquarian research, we recommend Mr Pinkerton's "Essay on Medals."

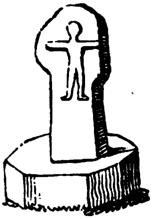
Having been led to offer these observations on ancient medals, we may perhaps be allowed to make one other digression on a subject naturally suggested by a visit to the vicarage of our reverend antiquary. The reader has been told that "around his house he had arranged several precious relics, amongst which was an ancient cross, raised upon a platform on three steps."

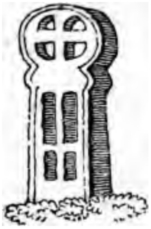
There is much obscurity with regard to the origin and uses of these stone crosses. We are, however, not disposed to enter into a discussion of such difficulty; but the reader may be gratified in having presented to him, in one view, a collection of such crosses as still exist in various parts of Cornwall. (See p. 351.)

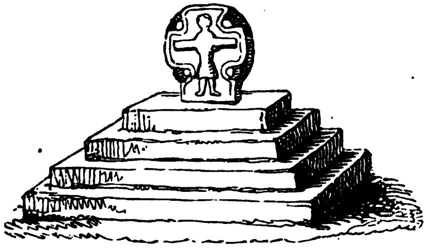
NOTE 9, p. 41.

Force, Motive Power.

There are philosophic truths apparently so at variance with the facts of daily observation and ordinary experience, as to require an early discipline of the mind to counteract the fallacies incident to the perception of sense; thus a belief that neither *matter* nor *force* can be created, nor annihilated, is to be only attained by a process of subtle reasoning; that the former cannot be created will probably be admitted with comparatively less difficulty, but that it is incapable of destruction is a proposition repulsive to those who daily witness its combustion and decay: and yet, even in that case, a small amount of chemical science will reconcile it with truth; not so, however, with the question of *force*, for its source lies so far beyond the range of ordinary apprehension as to assume the character of a creation, while the idea of its inexhaustibility, or infinite persistence, is opposed by its apparent cessation in every kind of motion we hourly witness on the surface of the earth. When we see the palpable motion of one body arrested by impact on another body, it is difficult to believe that the force which produced it is not annihilated; and yet not the smallest quantity of it is exhausted or lost by the collision, it is merely transferred into some other channel, or ceases to be recognised from its subdivision and diffusion. Mr Babbage observes that the pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice cease not to exist with the sounds to which they give rise; their quickly-attenuated force soon becomes inaudible to human ears, but the equality of action and reaction insures an endless transmission. In like manner, if we do but wave the hand, and the motion so produced has apparently ceased, its existence is nevertheless perpetuated; it is taken up by the air, by the walls of the room, and so by direct and reacting waves, continually comminuted, but never destroyed, although at a certain point we lose all means of detecting the motion, from its minute subdivision. No motion impressed by natural causes is ever obliterated. The momentary waves raised by the passing breeze, apparently born but to die on the spot which witnessed their birth, leave







behind them an endless progeny, which, visiting a thousand shores, will pursue their ceaseless course till ocean itself shall be no more.

As with matter, then, so is it with force, neither the one nor the other can be created or extinguished. If the clay of imperial Cæsar might "stop a hole to keep the wind away," so may we well ask whither have gone those waves raised by the voice of him who "kept the world in awe." Echo answers whither—for aught we know, or can tell, they may be wafting the thistle's down, or scattering the sands of some Lybian desert.

If force, then, be incapable of annihilation, there can be no such thing in Nature as absolute repose. Everything on the surface of the globe is in interminable motion; our bodies even, when consigned to the silence and darkness of the tomb, are slowly undergoing a cycle of changes, in consequence of the motions of their component particles, for what are chemical changes but the internal motions and interchanges of particles amongst themselves?

The philosopher recognises several forces in Nature, such as Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Gravitation, &c.: whether they be distinct powers or modifications of one essence, is a question; but it is possible that they may be transformed into each other. To render this proposition intelligible, let us take the subject of friction, which is nothing more than impeded motion, we have learnt that whole nations have obtained heat and light by rubbing together pieces of wood (p. 176), and the curious reader may on any morning witness the process by which the blacksmith kindles a fire by striking an iron nail on his anvil. On flying our kite, we have experienced the heat occasioned by the friction of its string, which, had it not met with obstruction, might have been let out to any extent, without the least indication of any elevation of temperature. Now these, and a thousand similar instances, prove that by arresting the *motive* force we convert it into a *calorific* force, or in other words, that the force which would have expended itself in motion finds a vent in the production of heat, while the heat so produced may, by suitable arrangements, be reconverted into motion In like manner, under necessary conditions, it may be converted into Electricity, and this latter force again may be made to assume the form of magnetism.

Mr Faraday has lately attempted to connect Gravity with Electricity with a view to discover whether the former might not be induced to assume some new form of power.

The whole subject of the *transmutation*, or, as it has been termed, the *correlation of forces*,* has recently much engaged our experimental philosophers, from which we may fairly anticipate some important discoveries in Dynamics. See Note 13.

NOTE 10, p. 48.

Momentum and the Mechanical Powers.

Mechanical powers are simple arrangements by which we gain power at the expense of time; thus, if a certain weight can be raised to a certain height by unassisted strength, and the same thing is afterwards done with one-tenth part of the exertion, through the use of a mechanical power, it will be found to occupy ten times as much time. In many cases, however, loss of time is not to be put in competition with the ability to do a thing; and since the advantages which the mechanical powers afford to man, by enabling him to perform feats which, without their assistance, would have been for ever beyond his reach, are incalculably great, the waste of time is overlooked, and is much more than balanced in the general result. It is true that if there are several small weights, manageable by human strength, to be raised to a certain height, it may be full as convenient to elevate them one by one, as to take the advantage of the mechanical powers in raising them all at once; because the same time will be necessary in both cases: but suppose we should have an enormous block of stone, or a great tree, to raise; bodies of this description cannot be separated into parts proportionable to the human strength without immense labour, nor, perhaps, without rendering them unfit for those purposes to which they are to be applied: hence then the great importance of the mechanical powers, by the use of which a man is able to manage with ease a weight many times greater than himself.

To understand the principle of a mechanical power, we must revert to the doctrine of momentum. It will be remembered that a small ball weighing only two pounds, and moving at the rate of 500 feet in a second, will produce as much effect as a cannon-ball of ten pounds in weight, provided it only moved at the rate of 100 feet in the same time. In like manner, a ball weighing one pound may be made to balance another of five pounds, by placing it five times farther from the centre of motion; for in such a case, for every inch of space through which the large ball passes, the small one will traverse five inches, and will thus generate five times the momentum. This may be rendered still more evident by turning to page 121, where the *sea-saw* is described, which, in fact, is a true mechanical power, and constitutes the simplest, but not the least important, of these powers. Besides which there are five others, viz., the *wheel* and *axle*; the *inclined plane*; the *screw*; the *pulley*; and the *wedge*; out of the whole, or a part of which, it will be found that every mechanical engine, or piece of machinery, is constructed; but for an account of them we must refer the student to any elementary work on mechanics. It is, however, obvious, from what has been stated, that they are all founded upon the principle *that the lengths of circles are in proportion to their diameters.*

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* We refer the reader to a work entitled, "*The Correlation of Forces*," by B. W. R. Grove, Q.C., F.R.S., &c.

NOTE 11, p. 57.

Centre of Gravity.

Those who have been in the habit of inspecting the works of the statuary must frequently have detected the art which he has displayed in imparting stability to his figures, by lowering their centre of gravity. The bronze figure of Achilles, in Hyde Park, affords a very striking illustration of such ingenuity: it is evident, from the position and height of the figure, that, had not a mass of matter been added to its base, its stability would have been extremely precarious, since the slightest movement might have thrown its line of direction beyond the base; but the addition at the base renders such an accident impossible, by lowering its centre of gravity. Other examples of similar contrivance are presented in several celebrated statues, wherein stability is insured by the judicious distribution of the draperies. In the celebrated statue of Peter at St Petersburg, the equilibrium of the mass is thus sustained by the introduction of a serpent twining upwards to his horse's tail. The effect, however, is so unfortunate as to have given occasion for a wit to remark, "It is a very fine horse, but what a pity that he should have worms!" Nor have our celebrated painters overlooked a principle, the neglect of which would have withheld from the most symmetrical figures the charms of beautiful proportion. The eye is always distressed by the apparent instability of an object; while a nicely-balanced figure calls forth a feeling of satisfaction: hence arises the perception of beauty excited by the swan as it majestically glides over the water; the nicely-poised equilibrium of its several parts conveys a feeling of repose; the water supporting its tail, while the neck, whose curvature is in itself so graceful, contributes to the equilibrium of its whole figure: but observe it on dry ground, and you will be painfully conscious of its imperfect equilibrium—the extreme disproportion between the long neck and the short tail, with the short legs and broad feet which cause a most ungrateful gait. Moore observes in his Diary that the statue of Bibiana in Rome, so generally admired, disappointed him from the concealment of the foot on which the figure stands, as taking away the idea of its being sufficiently supported. It is true that in some of the ancient statues of high art, as in the *Fighting Gladiator*, this law of equipoise would appear to have been set at defiance, but it never occurs, unless the figures be in energetic action, caught as it were, at the very moment when the muscles were at their greatest strain, to produce a momentary and transient effort.

NOTE 12, p. 70.

The Indian Blow-Pipe.

"When a native of Macoushi goes in quest of feathered game, or other birds, he seldom carries his bow and arrows. It is the *blow-pipe* he then uses. This extraordinary tube of death is, perhaps, one of the greatest natural curiosities in Guiana. It is not found in the country of Macoushi. Those Indians tell you that it grows to the south-west of them, in the wilds which extend betwixt them and the Rio Negro. The reed must grow to an amazing length, as the part the Indians use is from ten to eleven feet long, and no tapering can be perceived in it, one end being as thick as the other. It is of a bright yellow colour, perfectly smooth both inside and out. It grows hollow; nor is there the least appearance of a knot or joint throughout the whole extent. The natives call it *ourah*. This, of itself, is too slender to answer the end of a blow-pipe; but there is a species of palma, larger and stronger, and common in Guiana, and this the Indians make use of as a case, in which they put the *ourah*. It is brown, susceptible of a fine polish, and appears as if it had joints five or six inches from each other. It is called *samourah*, and the pulp inside is easily extracted, by steeping it for a few days in water. Thus the ourah and samourah, one within the other, form the blow-pipe of Guiana. The end which is applied to the mouth is tied round with a small silk-grass cord, to prevent its splitting; and the other end, which is apt to strike against the ground, is secured by the seed of the acuero-fruit cut horizontally through the middle with a hole made in the end, through which is put the extremity of the blowpipe. It is fastened on with string on the outside, and the inside is filled up with wild bees'-wax. The arrow is from nine to ten inches long. It is made out of the leaf of a species of palm-tree, called *concourite*, hard and brittle, and pointed as sharp as a needle. About an inch of the pointed end is poisoned with the *wourali*. The other end is burnt, to make it still harder, and wild cotton is put round it for about an inch and a half. It requires considerable practice to put on this cotton well. It must just be large enough to fit the hollow of the tube, and taper off to nothing downwards. They tie it on with a thread of the silk-grass to prevent it slipping off the arrow.

"The Indians have shown ingenuity in making a quiver to hold the arrows. It will contain from five to six hundred.

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With a quiver of poisoned arrows slung over his shoulder, and with his blowpipe in his hand, in the same position as a soldier carries his musket, see the Macoushi Indian advancing towards the forest in quest of powises, maroudis, waracabas, and other feathered game.

"These generally sit high up in the tall and tufted trees, but still are not out of the Indian's reach; for this blowpipe, at its greatest elevation, will send an arrow 300 feet. Silent as midnight he steals under them, and so cautiously does he tread the ground, that the fallen leaves rustle not beneath his feet. His ears are open to the least sound, while his eye, keen as that of the lynx, is employed in finding out the game in the thickest shade. Often he imitates their cry, and decoys them from tree to tree, till they are within range of his tube. Then, taking a poisoned arrow from his quiver, he puts it in the blowpipe, and collects his breath for the fatal puff. About two feet from the end through which he blows there are fastened two teeth of the acouri, and these serve him for a sight. Silent and swift the arrow flies, and seldom fails to pierce the object at which it is sent. Sometimes the wounded bird remains in the same tree where it was shot, and in three minutes falls down at the Indian's feet. Should he take wing, his flight is of short duration; and the Indian, following the direction he has gone, is sure to find him dead. It is natural to imagine that, when a slight wound only is inflicted, the game will make its escape. Far otherwise; the wourali poison almost instantaneously mixes with blood or water, so that, if you wet your finger, and dash it along the poisoned arrow in the quickest manner possible, you are sure to carry off some of the poison. Though three minutes generally elapse before the convulsions come on in the wounded bird, still a stupor evidently takes place sooner, and this stupor manifests itself by an apparent unwillingness in the bird to move.

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"The Indian, on his return home, carefully suspends his blow-pipe from the top of his spiral roof; seldom placing it in an oblique position, lest it should receive a cast."—WATERTON'S "*Wanderings in South America,*" p. 58.

Baron Humboldt informs us that Robert Schomburgk was so fortunate as to determine the species of *Arundinaria* from which the blow-pipes are formed, and that it is peculiar to the sandstone mountains between the Ventuari, the Paramu (Padamo,) and the Mavaca.—("*Aspects of Nature.*") It is curious that our word *cannon* should derive its origin from a reed (*canna*) suggested, no doubt, by its being straight and hollow; it is equally curious that it should have, figuratively, been used to denote a fundamental law of the Church, (*canon*,) as expressing a standard rule, no doubt from the reed having been recognised as an instrument of measure.

NOTE 13, p. 72.

Pendulum and Spring.

A clock is nothing more than a piece of machinery to maintain the action of the pendulum, and at the same time to count and register the number of its oscillations; and by that peculiar property, that one vibration commences exactly where the last terminates, no part of time is lost or gained in the juxtaposition of the units so counted.

If some extraneous force were not applied, in a clock or watch, to maintain or perpetuate the natural vibrations of a pendulum, or oscillations of a balance, they would soon come to rest by reason of friction in the mechanism, and the resistance opposed by the air to the parts in motion. This force, in the larger clocks, is usually a suspended weight; but, in the portable clock and watch, it is a spring coiled in a metallic box that actuates the wheel-work by gradually unbending itself.

In the former of these cases, the weight is suspended by a cord or chain that is coiled round a cylinder when wound up, which cylinder, being of uniform diameter throughout its length, is acted on by the cord, when fast at the interior end, by a similar force in every situation; and therefore imparts through the train, connected with its great wheel, invariable impulses to the escapement-wheel, at every vibration of the pendulum; which pendulum receives therefrom such a slight push, as is just sufficient to restore the momentum which it loses from friction and the air's resistance, and thus the uniform motion of the pendulum is perpetuated. But when a spring is substituted for a weight, it is clear that its agency cannot be uniform, since, as the reader will learn by turning to page 74, it is a general law that elastic bodies, in the recovery of their form, after the removal of the compressing force, exert a greater power at first than at last, so that the whole progress of restoration is a *retarded* motion. It therefore became necessary to introduce some mechanical contrivance which might equalise such motion. This correction is effected by an apparatus termed a FUSEE, and is nothing more than the application of the wheel and axle; it is that conical barrel seen in most watches round which the chain coils in the act of winding up. When the fusee is full of chain, or the watch is wound up, the spring, through the medium of the chain, will act upon its upper part, which being very near the centre will give the spring but little power; but as the spring uncoils and diminishes in strength, it will act upon a larger part of the fusee, until at last it gets to the bottom of it, and consequently, if the several increasing grooves upon it are made to increase in the same proportion as the power of the spring decreases, an equable force must be obtained.

Springs may be thus said to afford the means of *packing up* force, to be used whenever it is required. Mr Babbage observes that the half-minute which we daily devote to the winding up our watches is an exertion by which we *pack* a quantity of force, which is gradually expended during the ensuing twenty-four hours. Springs, then, will enable us to avail ourselves of inconstant and variable forces which must otherwise remain incapable of useful application, and the period may arrive when force will thus become an article of traffic, and machines be sent to the windmill to be wound up. The manner in which force is constantly allowed to run to waste is quite extraordinary in the present advanced state of science. We need only look at the working of the treadmill. The public are little aware of the enormous sums annually expended in towing vessels by steam from the Nore to the port of London; were floating treadmills established, the labour of those, upon whom punishment has been awarded, might be rendered available to the most important interests; whereas, with the present system, not only is this labour entirely lost, but is actually a source of expense; for machines, with all the accompaniments of engineers, are provided to counterbalance the force so uselessly generated.

Note 14, p. 72.

Elastic Chairs and Beds.

The elastic property of iron springs has been exemplified in a very striking manner, by the invention of Pratt's elastic chairs and beds; which, instead of the usual stuffing of feathers, are filled with iron-wire twisted into spiral form! Down itself cannot be more gentle or springy; it yields to pressure, and yet never becomes lumpy; beds thus constructed have the advantage of not heating the body; and above all, they never require to be shaken or "made." Had Vulcan fortunately made such a discovery before his ejectment from Olympus, his wife, Venus, would surely never have treated him with that contempt which mythologists have recorded of her; while her priestesses, the housemaids, must, in gratitude, have been bound to extend their protection to a benefactor who could save them so much daily labour. Nor have we ever heard that imagination, which so plays the wanton with us in our slumbers, has resented the innovation, and been less propitious to us on our *iron* than she was on our *downy* couches.

Note 15, p. 73.

Duck and Drake.

The following explanation of the movements of the shell in this game is offered to the reader. It is evident that, as the shell strikes the surface of the water *obliquely*, its force, according to the law of the parallelogram of forces, will be resolved into one that is *horizontal*, and into another that is *vertical;* the ratio between which must evidently be determined by the acuteness of the angle at which the shell is projected; and in truth, the success of the game will mainly depend upon the adjustment of such angle; not that the player can be supposed to be guided by any mathematical calculation, but by a tact, gained by experience, and a ready consent between the eye and the hand. Now, should the *horizontal* force too greatly preponderate, it is evident that the shell would skim along the surface of the water without striking it; and, on the contrary, should the *vertical* prevail, it would strike the water too perpendicularly, and its onward course be thus at once arrested. But, for the successful accomplishment of the game, we will take it for granted that the angle regulating these forces has been skilfully adjusted, then it will follow that when the shell first strikes the water, a reaction will take place, and instead of sinking it will rebound with only a small diminution of its horizontal force, by the aid of which it will proceed onward, and, combined with the influence of gravity, be again brought in a curved course to the surface of the water: when after a second rebound, it will renew its course as before, and although these movements will become more circumscribed after each repetition, they will not cease until the projectile force is overcome by gravity. A difference of opinion has arisen regarding the cause of the shell's rebound from the surface of the water: we have referred it to elasticity, since the surface of a fluid, when so suddenly struck as not to allow time for the displacement of its particles, may at the moment be regarded as meeting all the conditions of a solid and resisting body, the inertia of the parts requiring an interval for the assumption of a sensible motion. It is true that nothing is easier to be divided than water; and yet if the palm of the hand be struck with considerable velocity against its surface, not only resistance, but a great amount of pain is experienced, just as if a solid had been struck: numerous instances of death have occurred to persons falling flat on the water from a height; nay, a musket ball, when fired against water is repelled and even flattened. To take another example: what substance will more readily crumble than a tallow candle? and yet if we load a musket with powder, and instead of a bullet introduce a candle, and fire it at a board, it will penetrate it, as if it were a ball, without suffering the slightest injury; the explanation of which is obviously to be referred to that rapid motion, or momentum, with which the candle end is impelled, not allowing time for the separation of its particles. In the same way the head of a thistle may be struck off by the smart blow of a stick, as Tarquin struck off the heads of the poppy, without so much as bending the stalk. If water then can, under the conditions we have endeavoured to explain, assume the properties of a solid surface, why not that of elasticity? Those who have maintained a different opinion have attempted to explain the rebound of the shell, by supposing a displacement of a column of water by the shock, and its effort to rise up and resume its place, in order to restore an equilibrium, essential to the constitution of all liquids; but is elasticity anything more than an effort of abruptly-dislocated particles to resume their normal condition?

Note 16, p. 74.

Vegetable Elasticity.

Impatiens, or *Touch-me-not*, affords a good example. The seed-vessel consists of one cell with five divisions; each of these, when the seed is ripe, on being touched, suddenly folds itself into a spiral form, leaps from the stalk, and disperses the seeds to a great distance by its elasticity. The capsule of the geranium and the beard of wild oats are twisted for a similar purpose. (Darwin's "Botanic Garden.") The seed vessel of Euphorbia is extremely elastic, projecting the seeds with great force. An elastic pouch also serves to scatter the seeds of the Oxalis. The seeds of ripe oats are projected from the calyx with such violence, that, in a fine and dry day, you may often hear them thrown out with a sudden snap; and the pericarp of the *Dorsiferus ferus* is furnished with a peculiar elastic spring intended for ejecting its seeds. The *box* affords another example; its fruit is divided into three cells, containing two seeds in each, which, when ripe, are cast forth by the elasticity of the vessels.

NOTE 17, p. 77.

Table-Turning—Spirit-Rapping—Clairvoyance.

> "A flam more senseless than the rog'ry
> Of old Aruspicy, or Aug'ry."—HUDIBRAS.

That in an age rejoicing in intellectual progress and high scientific attainment, any number of educated persons could have been found who believed that a round table of wood, by the contact of several hands, without the slightest exertion of muscular force, might by a mere act of their volition be made to revolve, is really past all rational belief; such, however, is the simple and unadorned fact! and strange and unaccountable as it may seem, we will venture to add, that there were very few apartments in the fashionable parts of London that did not constitute the scenes of this discreditable exhibition. The conditions said to be necessary for its success were, that three or four or more persons stationed around the table should agree as to whether it should turn to the right or left hand; otherwise, said these Thebans, "the volitions might clash and counteract each other." This point having been arranged, the hands were to be gently placed upon the margin of the table, taking great care to avoid the slightest pressure, when, after a certain interval, the table would begin to move, very slowly at first, but after a time with such accelerated velocity as to carry with it the reluctant hands of the operators, under the influence, as they believed, of some diabolical agency.

Now, it might have been well supposed that it was scarcely necessary to call to our aid any scientific experiment to prove that the hands moved the table, and not the table the hands; Mr Faraday, however, at the height of the popular mania, did actually condescend to disabuse the public mind, and to prove by an experiment, as simple as it was convincing, that mechanical pressure was inadvertently and unconsciously exerted under the influence of an expectant result, and that the party might, without any prejudice to their good faith—we say nothing of their good sense—have believed that their hands were quite passive in the matter; but they were nevertheless the victims of an obvious fallacy. At first, the pressure would be downwards, but the anxious act of watching in one steady direction, as previously arranged, would soon give a similar direction to their persons, and a consequent obliquity to the pressure of the hands, in conformity with the well-known laws of mental and muscular action; and thus does the table turn in the predicated direction. Let it be also remembered, that the hands must soon become fatigued, under which condition it will be very difficult to maintain a uniform pressure downwards. It is to be hoped that this popular delusion has now passed away, and that the table has been turned to another account, and been placed on its proper footing. On the return of common sense the vagabond impostor has been summarily passed to its legitimate settlement—the booth of the Juggler—where, under the guidance of Professor Anderson, it has been running its nightly rounds, doubtless to the great delight of a crowded audience.

SPIRIT-RAPPING.—Here we have another pretty specimen of the wisdom of the nineteenth century! It cannot, however, be properly included in the foregoing category; for it is obviously a gross imposition, not redeemable by any excusable fallacy. Its patrons avow that the spirits convey information through some person selected as a "*medium.*" It has not even the pretensions of novelty: it is, indeed, said that we are indebted to our American cousins for the invention, but this is not true; they may have brought out an old story into the light, just as their plough has unexpectedly turned up *trefoil* from a long-neglected soil. Sounds have ever been enlisted into the service of the credulous. We read in the Life of old Jerome Cardan of Milan, (*Girotano Cardano,*) that preceding the death of his mother, he heard a mysterious rapping, of which he counted nearly one hundred and fifty raps: then again, Sir Thomas Tresham, a member of an ancient family long resident at Ruston Hall, near Kettering, in Northamptonshire, relates, in the reign of Elizabeth, that, "while his servant was reading to him a treatise of 'Proof there is a God, there were upon the wainscot table, at that instant, to his great amazement, three loud knocks as if given by an iron hammer."

CLAIRVOYANCE.—The imputed faculty conferred on persons by *Mesmeric* treatment—that of seeing transactions occurring at distant places—is not so new as the disciples of Madame Julie may suppose There is not a story of this kind, whether of ancient or modern date, that does not betray itself as an imposition, and bear upon its very surface the slime of the serpent's trail.—"*Ex uno disce omnes.*"—The moment the Emperor Domitian was stabbed, Apollonius is said to have stopped short in the middle of a harangue he was delivering at Ephesus, exclaiming—"Strike the tyrant!" *After* the news had arrived, he declared that the expression had an allusion to the event which he had seen passing in his mind's eye. It is not difficult for any one so to select a casual expression as to make it applicable to any simultaneous event subsequently brought to light; or to predict an event after it had come to pass.

It would appear that Lavater was one of these credulous mystics, for he had made a promise to the metaphysician Bonnet, that a sorceress residing at Morat should four times on a day declare what Bonnet himself was doing at Geneva. We have heard of the promise, but not of its fulfilment.

NOTE 18, p. 94.

A simple Orrery.

A very instructive toy might be constructed by placing a taper in the centre of a japanned waiter, to represent the sun, and fixing in a watch-glass an India-rubber ball, with the parallels of latitude and meridians painted thereon, with the other characters of the globe. During its revolution around the candle, in consequence of the tendency of its centre of gravity to its lowest position, the diurnal and annual motions, and also the parallelism of its axis, will be represented, together with the concomitant phenomena.

NOTE 19, p. 98.

Conic Sections.

If a cone, or sugar-loaf, be cut through in certain directions, we shall obtain figures which are termed *conic sections;* thus, if we cut through the sugar-loaf in a direction parallel to its base, or bottom, the outline or edge of the loaf where it is cut will be a *circle*. If the cut is made so as to slant, and not be parallel to the base of the loaf, the outline is an *ellipse*, provided the cut goes quite through the sides of the loaf all round; but if it goes slanting, and parallel to the line of the loaf's side, the outline is a *parabola*, a conic section, or curve, to which this note more immediately relates. This curve is distinguished by characteristic properties, every point of it bearing a certain fixed relation to a certain point within it, as the circle does to its centre.

NOTE 20, p. 101.

Earthquake of Lisbon.

To understand the allusion in the text the reader will be pleased to remember, that, during the dreadful earthquake of Lisbon, bands of wretches took advantage of the general consternation to commit the most atrocious acts of robbery and murder. In fact, a considerable part of the city was destroyed by incendiaries, who, during the disaster, set fire to the houses, that they might pillage them with greater impunity.

NOTE 21, p. 101.

Geology applied to Agriculture.

The important light which geology is capable of affording to agricultural science is daily becoming more apparent: indeed, how can it be otherwise, when we consider that soils are formed by the admixture of finely-divided earthy matter, with various organic substances in a state of decomposition; different rocks giving origin to different soils? Thus poor and hungry soils are produced from the decomposition of granite and sandstone, and will often remain for ages with only a thin covering of vegetation; while soils derived from limestone, greenstone, basalt, &c., are frequently clothed by nature with the perennial grasses, and afford, when ploughed up, a rich bed of vegetation for every species of cultivated plant. In pursuing this subject, we cannot fail to be struck with the apparent design in the arrangement of these different rocks, in which the primitive and granitic rocks, which are least calculated to afford a fertile soil, constitute, for the most part, the mountain districts of the world, which, from their elevation and irregularities, are but ill adapted for human habitation; whereas the lower and more temperate regions are usually composed of secondary strata, the compound nature of which adapts them for becoming highly useful to mankind, by their subserviency to the formation of soils capable of luxuriant vegetation. No doubt then can be entertained as to the important connection subsisting between the geological structure and the relative fertility of a country: I believe that one of the first practical essays, demonstrating the existence of such relations, is a memoir published in the first volume of the Transactions of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, entitled "Observations on the Geological Structure of Cornwall, with a view to trace its connection with, and influence upon, its agricultural economy, and to establish a rational system of improvement, by the scientific application of mineral manure." This memoir has never received the attention which the importance of its subject deserves. There is certainly no district in the British empire where the natural relations between the varieties of soil and the subjacent rocks can be more easily discovered and traced, or more effectually investigated, than in the county of Cornwall; and nowhere can the information which such an inquiry is calculated to afford be more immediately and successfully applied for the improvement of land and the general advancement of agricultural science. As we advance from a primitive to an alluvial district, the relations to which we have alluded become gradually less distinct and apparent, and are ultimately lost in the confused complication of the soil itself, and in that general obscurity which necessarily envelops every object in a state of decomposition; we can therefore only hope to succeed in such an investigation by a patient and laborious examination of a *Primitive* country; after which we may be enabled to extend our inquiries with greater advantage through those districts which are more completely covered with soil and obscured by luxuriant vegetation; just as the eye, gazing upon a beautiful statue, traces the outline of the limbs, and the swelling contour of its form, through the flowing draperies which invest it.

Note 22, pp. 104; 193; 330; 332.

The Rifle.

Rifle guns are those whose barrels, instead of being smooth on the inside, like our common pieces, are formed with a number of spiral channels, resembling screws; except only that the threads, or rifles, are less deflected, making only one turn, or a little more, in the whole length of the piece. This construction is employed for correcting the irregularity in the flight of balls from smooth barrels, by imparting to the balls a rotatory motion perpendicular to the line of direction. The same effect has lately been accomplished by an extremely simple and obvious contrivance, and which will, probably, altogether supersede the necessity of rifling the barrel. It consists in cutting a spiral groove in the bullet itself, which, when discharged, is thus acted upon by the air, and the same rotatory motion imparted to it as that produced by the furrows in the barrel. But it is the rotatory motion which steadies the flight of the ball; and by whichever method this is produced, the theory of its action will be the same. It has been long and generally known, that, when the common bullet is discharged from a plane barrel, its flight is extremely irregular and uncertain; it has, for instance, been found, from the experiments of Mr Robins, that, notwithstanding the piece was firmly fixed and fired with the same weight of powder, the ball was sometimes deflected to the right, sometimes to the left, sometimes above, and at others below the true line of direction. It has also been observed, that the degree of deflection increases in a much greater proportion than the distance of the object fired at. It is not difficult to account for these irregularities; they, doubtless, proceed from the impossibility of fitting a ball so accurately to any plane piece but that it will rub more against one side of the barrel than another in its passage through it. Whatever side, therefore, of the muzzle the ball is last in contact with on quitting the piece, it will acquire a whirling motion towards that side, and will be found to bend the line of its flight in the same direction; whether it be upwards or downwards, to the right or left; or obliquely, partaking in some degree of both; and, after quitting the barrel, this deflection, though in the first instance but trifling and inconsiderable, is still farther increased by the resistance of the air, this being greatest on that side where the whirling motion conspires with the progressive one, and least on that side where it is opposed to it. Thus, if the ball in its passage out rubs against the left side of the barrel, it will whirl towards that side; and as the right side of the ball will, therefore, turn up against the air during its flight, the resistance of the air will become greater on the right side, and the ball be forced away to the left, which was the direction it whirled in. It happens, moreover, from various accidental circumstances, that the axis of the ball's rotation frequently changes its position several times during the flight; so that the ball, instead of bending its course uniformly in the same direction, often describes a track variously contorted. From this view of the causes of aberration in the flight of balls, it will be evident that the only means of correcting it is by preventing the ball from rubbing more against one side of the barrel than another in passing through it, and by giving to the bullet a motion which will counteract every accidental one, and preserve its direction, by making the resistance of the air upon the fore part continue the same during its whole flight; that is, by giving it a rotatory motion perpendicular to the line of direction. The contrivance for this purpose is called *rifling*, and consists, as we have before stated, in forming upon the inside of the barrel a number of threads and furrows, either in a straight or spiral direction, into which the ball is moulded; and hence, when the gun is fired, the indented zone of the bullet follows the sweep of the rifle, and thereby, besides its progressive motion, acquires a considerable one round the axis of the barrel, which motion will be continued to the bullet after its separation from the piece, so that it is constantly made to whirl round an axis coincident with the line of its flight. Many familiar examples of the utility and effect of *rifling* might be here adduced. If the bricklayer, while unroofing a house, be observed, he will be seen to give to the slates which he throws down a whirling motion, at a certain angle, which insures their falling edgeways on the ground, and thus preserves them from fracture.

NOTE 23, p. 104.

The Boomerang.

This curious missile is used, both in war and in the chase, by the natives of Australia with remarkable dexterity and address. The first account of it was received from Major Mitchell, in his "Journal of an Expedition to the Rivers Darling and Murray." It is a thin curved stick, three feet long and two inches wide by three-quarters of an inch thick, curved, or crooked, so as to form two arms of unequal length, making an obtuse angle with each other. Its upper surface is convex, its under one flat. The flight of this weapon is extraordinary, and does not admit of a very easy explanation. Its course will necessarily vary in all cases with the angle at which it is projected. Being grasped at one end by the right hand, it is either thrown *sickle-wise*, upwards into the air, or downwards, so as to strike the ground at some distance from the thrower. In the former case it rises upon the wind with a rotatory motion, and in a crooked direction, towards any given point with great precision, and after a considerable flight returns, in an elliptical orbit, to a spot near its starting-point. In the second case, it rebounds from the ground in a straight line, pursuing a *ricochet* motion so as to hit any oblique object at a distance, even one behind a tree, with great accuracy. The most singular curve described by it is when thrown into the air at an angle above 45°, in which case its flight is always backwards, and the native who throws it stands with his back, instead of his face, to the object he is desirous of striking.

When properly thrown, it is evident that two motions are imparted to the missile—the one, a direct forward motion; the other, a rotatory motion. Now, as soon as the force of projection is nearly expended, the rotatory motion comes into play, and then causes the instrument to ascend. In consequence of one arm being longer than the other, as long as the Boomerang continues its rotation about the angle that its two arms make with each other, one end has a constant tendency to be lower than the other, and it always points towards the ground at an inclination of about 30° or 35°; it consequently rises with a screw-like motion, dividing the air with its upper convex surface, whilst the lower side, being flat, is buoyed up, as it were, by the subjacent atmosphere. As long as the rotatory motion continues in sufficient force to counteract gravity it will continue to ascend, but, on this failing, it will fall to the ground. The most obscure part of its flight is its return, after having attained its highest elevation, to the very spot whence it started; this would appear to depend upon its being kept in the same plane by the rapidity of its whirling motion.

This singular weapon probably originated in attempts to kill ducks by a projectile, in places where they abound, as on the interior rivers and lagoons, and where we accordingly find the instrument much more in use than on the sea-coast, and better made, being often covered with wood-carving. This instrument can be purchased at the toy-shop, and, together with the Flying-top and Kite, may be taken out by a juvenile party, when it will afford much amusement and salutary exercise during a ramble in the country.

It may be observed that the short heavy boomerang, having a *parabolic* curve on the outside, and a *hyperbolic* curve on the inside, will fly much better than the long, thin, light ones which are generally exposed for sale. Should the boomerang have both its sides perfectly flat, and be thrown in the usual way, it will not ascend; but if discharged in a slanting direction upwards, it will return in a short time to the spot whence it set out.

The following notice appeared in the "Philosophical Magazine" for July 1852, under the signature of J. E. Gray:—

"If a common Manilla or palm-leaf hat, having a low crown, and the margin of the rim sharply turned up about half an inch high, is thrown into the air with the cavity of the hat upwards, it returns back towards the thrower like the Australian Boomerang. The angle at which it returns depends on the angle at which it is thrown; and if the angle be sufficiently acute, it will fall some distance behind the thrower.

"The experiment depends upon the position of the hat; for if thrown with the *cavity downwards*, it alights in the direction thrown, and does not return.

"A pasteboard disc, with a turned-up edge, has the same effect as a hat."

In the Scandinavian mythology, the god Thor always carried a mallet, which, as often as he discharged it, returned back to the hand of itself. These people must have had some notion of the Boomerang. It has also a resemblance to a weapon used by the ancient Egyptians for killing wild-fowl, as the pastime is represented on the walls of a tomb at Thebes.

Note 24, p. 105.
Bodies revolve on the Shorter Axis.

The philosophy of the fact is simply this:—while a body revolves on its axis, the component particles of the mass move in circles, the centres of which are placed in the axis; a centrifugal force therefore is generated, which is resisted by the cohesion of the parts of the mass, and this tendency of each particle to fly off is expended in exciting a pressure upon the axis; and it is this strain which produces the effect in question, the axis of least pressure being alone the permanent axis.

Note 25, p. 108.
Centre of Percussion.

If a stick be held at one of its extremities, and allowed to fall on the edge of a table, the farther end will rebound, or the hand will sustain a shock, unless it be struck exactly on the centre of percussion, in which case the stick will fall as a dead weight. The repetition of this simple experiment will readily convey to the young philosopher an idea of the nature of what is termed the *centre of percussion*. The power of the hammer entirely depends upon the position of its centre of percussion; and so of that of the sword; many of which have this particular spot marked on the blade; for should it strike on any point far from it, it is probable that, like the sword of Atrides, in his conflict with Paris, it may be shivered.

Note 26, p. 113.
Spinning of the Top.

It has been stated in the text, that the gyrations of the top depend exactly upon the same principle as that which produces the *precession of the equinoxes:* viz., an unequal attractive force exerted upon the revolving mass. In the one case, this is known to arise from the action of the sun and moon on the excess of matter about the equatorial regions of the earth; in the other, from the parts of the top being unequally affected by gravity, while it is spinning in an inclined or oblique position. To those philosophers who have condescended to read the present work, if there be any such, and are thereby induced to pursue the investigation of a subject which has hitherto excited far too little attention, we beg to submit the following remarks:—

If a top could be made to revolve on a point without friction, and in a vacuum, in the case of its velocity being *infinite*, it would continue to revolve for ever, in the same position, without gyration. If the velocity were *finite*, it would for ever remain unchanged in position, in the event of the centre of gravity being directly over the point of rotation. In any other position (supposing its velocity very great, although not infinite) there would arise a continued uniform gyration; the line which passes through the point of rotation, and the centre of gravity, always making the same angle with the horizon, or describing the same circle round the zenith. But in all artificial experiments the circumstances are very remarkably changed; if, indeed, the centre of gravity happens to be situated perpendicularly over the point of rotation, the top will continue quite steady, or *sleeping*, as it is termed, till nearly the whole of its velocity of rotation is expended. In any other position the top begins to gyrate, but, reclining at all times on the outside of its physical point of gyration, the top is uniformly impelled inwards: and this (when the velocity is considerable, and the point broad) acts with a force sufficient for carrying the top towards its quiescent or *sleeping* point; but when the velocity is much diminished, this power becomes feeble, the gyrations increase in diameter, and the top ultimately falls.

Note 27, p. 124.
The Cycloid.

A *cycloid* is a peculiar curved line, and is described by any one point of a circle as it rolls along a plane, and turns round its centre; thus, for instance, the nail on the felly of a cart-wheel traces a cycloid in the air as the wheel proceeds. This curve is distinguished by some remarkable properties, the most important of which is that mentioned in the text, viz., that any body moving in such a curve, by its own weight, or swing, will pass through all distances of it in exactly the same time; and it is for such a reason that pendulums are made to swing in cycloids, in order that they may move in equal times, whether they go through a long or a short part of the same curve. Where the arc described is small, a portion of the circle will be sufficiently accurate, because it will be seen that such an arc will not deviate much from an equal portion of a cycloidal curve.

The cycloid is remarkable as being that path, with the exception of the perpendicular, through which a body will move with the greatest velocity: suppose, for example, a body is to descend from any one point to any other, by means of some force acting on it, together with its weight: a person unacquainted with mechanics would say at once that a straight line is the path it must take to effect this in the shortest possible time, since that is the shortest of all lines that can be drawn between two points. Undoubtedly it is the shortest; notwithstanding which, however, the body would be longer in traversing it than in moving through a cycloid. If a body were to move through a space of fifty or a hundred yards, by its weight and some other force acting together, the way it must take to do this in the shortest possible time is by moving in a cycloid. It is supposed that birds which build in rocks possess an instinctive knowledge of this fact, and drop or fly down from height to height in this course. There is certainly a general resemblance between the curved path they describe on such occasions and the cycloid, but it would be difficult to establish the fact by experiment. Man, however, has founded upon this principle some applications of great value in practical mechanics. In Switzerland, and in several parts of Germany, for example, slides have been constructed along the sides of mountains, by which the timber felled near their summits is conducted with extreme rapidity to the distant valleys.

Note 28, p. 127.
Billiards.

This interesting game is of French origin (*billiard*, of *bile*, and from the Latin *pila*, a ball.) It was hailed as a favourite diversion at the court of Henry III. of France; and was thence communicated to all the courts of modern Europe. To the novice it may appear as a game of accidents and chances, but experience has enabled us to determine the effects of the stroke given to a ball with wonderful precision; and it is quite extraordinary to observe the accuracy with which an accomplished player can effect his object, by measuring with his eye the angle at which he should make the stroke, the position of the ball with respect to the cushion, and the distance of the point of the ball from its centre, at which it should be struck. By such skilful management the ball may be made to take directions which would, at first view, be regarded as contrary to all the known laws of motion, such, for instance, as passing round an object, such as a hat placed on the table, and to strike a ball behind it into a pocket.

Upon this subject the reader should consult a work by M. Mingaud, translated and published by John Thurston, the late celebrated billiard-table maker of Catherine Street, Strand, to whom we are indebted for mechanical improvements in the table, which have brought it as near to perfection as the nature of the materials will probably ever allow. His plane surface, composed of slate, is no longer liable to be warped by meteoric changes, which rendered the old wooden table so uncertain; then, again, he has substituted India-rubber for the cushions, and which, by a late peculiar process, termed "*vulcanizing*," is enabled to retain its elasticity under all the vicissitudes of temperature.

Note 29, p. 128.

Collision of Bodies.

In investigating the effects produced upon bodies by collision, it is necessary to distinguish between elastic and non-elastic substances, since their motions after impact are governed by very different laws. The subject, however, is far too important to admit of discussion in a note, but the reader is advised to refer to some elementary work on mechanics, with a view to obtain a general knowledge of this subject.

Note 30, p. 136.

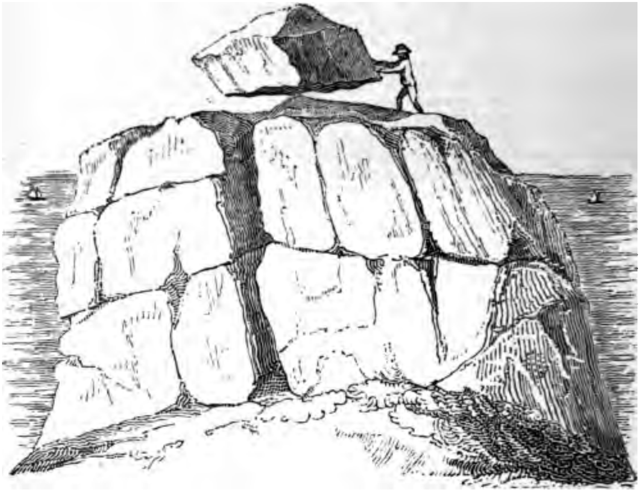
Druidical Remains.

Karn-brĕh hill rises a little to the south-west of Redruth, in Cornwall, to an elevation of 697 feet. Its principal interest is derived from the speculations of the antiquary, Dr Borlase, who regarded it as having been once the grand centre of druidical worship: and he asserts, in his "Antiquities of Cornwall," that, at this very time, the remains of those monuments which were peculiar to that priesthood may be discovered, such as *rock basins*, *circles*, *rock idols*, *cromlechs*, *karns*, *caves*, *religious enclosures*, *logan stones*, *a gorseddau*, or place of elevation, whence the druids pronounced their decrees, and the traces of a *grove of oaks*. This is all very ingenious and imposing, and may be easily believed by those who have either not visited the spot, or, having visited it, not viewed the objects with geological eyes. The author, who has repeatedly examined this rocky eminence, does not hesitate to state that there is not the slightest pretence for considering the druidical monuments of Dr Borlase as the works of man: on the contrary, they are evidently the results of the operation of time and the elements, the usual agents employed by Nature in the decomposition of mountain masses. The "rock basins" of antiquaries are rounded cavities on the surface of rocks, and are occasionally as spheroidal internally as if they had been actually formed by a turning-lathe. It was this artificial appearance which first suggested the hypothesis concerning their origin, and induced the antiquary to regard them as pools of lustration. It may, however, be remarked, in the first place, that, supposing them to have been the works of the druids, these priests must have been indefatigable artists, for there is scarcely a block of granite on which one or more of such pools are not visible, although some are, undoubtedly, much more complete and imposing than others.

Dr Macculloch, in an interesting paper, published in the Transactions of the Geological Society, on the decomposition of the granite of Cornwall, has justly observed that the true nature of these rock basins may be easily traced by inspecting the rocks themselves. On examination, they will always be found to contain distinct grains of *quartz*, and fragments of the other constituent parts of the granite. A small force is sufficient to detach from the sides of these cavities additional fragments, showing that a process of decomposition is still going on under favourable circumstances. The principal of these circumstances is the presence of water, or rather the alternate action of air and water. If a drop of water can only make an effectual lodgement on a surface of this granite, a small cavity is sure to be sooner or later produced; this will insensibly enlarge as it becomes capable of holding more water; and the sides, as they continue to waste, will necessarily retain an even and rounded cavity, on account of the uniform texture of the rock This explanation is sufficiently satisfactory: in addition to which, it may be stated, that these very basins not unfrequently occur on the perpendicular sides of rocks, as may be distinctly seen in the granite of Scilly, and in the gritstone rocks in the park of the late Sir Joseph Banks, in the parish of Ashover, in Derbyshire; a fact which at once excludes the idea of their artificial origin.

The other grotesque and whimsical appearances of rocky masses, such as *rock idols, logan stones, &c.*, are to be explained by the tendency which granite possesses of wearing more rapidly on the angles and edges than on the sides: thus, then, upon simple and philosophical principles, are such appearances to be satisfactorily accounted for, and the *phantasmagoria* of Borlase vanishes as the light penetrates the theatre so long dedicated to its exhibition.

We shall conclude this note with a few observations upon the celebrated logan, or logging, stone, near the Land's End, Cornwall, of which we present our readers with a faithful sketch.



The foundation of this part of the coast is a stupendous group of granite rocks, which rise in pyramidal clusters to a great altitude, and overhang the sea. The celebrated *logan stone* here represented is an immense block weighing above sixty tons. The surface in contact with the under rock is of very small extent, and the whole mass is so nicely balanced, that, notwithstanding its magnitude, the strength of a single man applied to its under edge is sufficient to make it oscillate. It is the nature of granite to disintegrate into rhomboidal and tabular masses, which, by the further operation of air and moisture, gradually lose their solid angles, and approach the spheroidal form. The fact of the upper part of the cliff being more exposed to atmospheric agency than the parts beneath, will sufficiently explain why these rounded masses so frequently rest on blocks which still preserve the tabular form; and since such spheroidal blocks must obviously rest in that position in which their lesser axes are perpendicular to the horizon, it is equally evident, that, whenever an adequate force is applied, they must vibrate on their point of support.

Although we are thus led to deny the druidical origin of this stone, for which so many zealous antiquaries have contended, still we by no means intend to deny that the druids employed it as an engine of superstition; it is possible that, having observed so curious a property, they dexterously contrived to make it answer the purposes of an ordeal, and, by regarding it as the *touchstone* of truth, acquitted or condemned the accused by its motions. Mason poetically alludes to this supposed property in the following lines:—

> "Behold yon huge
> And unknown sphere of living adamant,
> Which, poised by magic, rests its central weight
> On yonder pointed rock; firm as it seems,
> Such is its strange and virtuous property,
> It moves obsequious to the gentlest touch
> Of him whose heart is pure; but to a traitor,
> Though even a giant's prowess nerved his arm,
> It stands as fix'd as Snowdon."

Note 31, p. 138.

Contact, and its necessary consequence, Cohesion.

After all, there may be no such thing in nature as absolute contact; the term is purely conventional, denoting such a proximity as may be necessary for the production of certain phenomena; and in all philosophical discussions such is the interpretation of the term. As long as *pores* exist in bodies it is obvious that their particles cannot be said to be in contact, and the existence of such porosity in every species of matter which can be subjected to our senses is sufficiently proved by its compressibility. There is no known substance, however dense, that may not be made, either by pressure or reduction of temperature, to occupy less space; and were it possible to bring the ultimate atoms into absolute contact, the globe itself might be compressed into such an extremely narrow compass as to be too small even as a foot-ball for the Pigmies.

When we speak therefore of contact, we only mean that proximity necessary for educing the power of cohesive attraction. It has been shown that by friction we are enabled to retain a firm footing, and to walk steadily along a surface: whereas, could we insure absolute contact, we should not be able to move at all; suppose, for instance, the soles of our feet came into actual contact with the ground, a cohesive attraction would take place between the surfaces which no muscular effort could overcome. We may, to a certain extent, have experienced this difficulty in walking over a muddy road, when the water, by filling up the inequalities of the surfaces, converts our shoes into a kind of "*Sucker.*"

The cohesive power imparted to particles of matter, by bringing them into the closest possible contact, receives a pleasing illustration from the ingenious invention of the late Mr Brockedon, for forming lead pencils, and for which he received an honorary medal from the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition. His process consists in consolidating finely-powdered and sifted black-lead into a mass as dense, and of the same specific gravity, as native Cumberland lead, which is effected by packing the powder in air-tight cases, and pumping out the air, which always offers a great obstacle to contact, and then subjecting the contents thus prepared to a pressure of five thousand tons, inflicted by two blows.

Note 32, p. 139.

Animal Suction.

We are indebted to Sir Everard Home for a description of that peculiar structure by which several species of animals are enabled to sustain their bodies in opposition to the force of gravity. His first paper upon this subject is published in the 106th volume of the "Philosophical Transactions," in which he says he was not aware that any animal larger than the house-fly was endowed by nature with such a power, as to admit of examination, until Sir Joseph Banks mentioned that the *lacerta gecko*, a species of lizard, which is a native of the island of Java, comes out of an evening from the roofs of the houses, and walks down the smooth, hard, and polished chinam walls, in search of the flies which settle upon them, and which are its natural food, and then runs up again to the roof of the house. Sir Joseph, while at Batavia, amused himself with catching this animal, by standing close to the wall, at some distance from the lizard, with a long flattened pole, which, being made suddenly to scrape the surface of the wall, knocked the animal down. He presented Sir Everard with a specimen weighing five ounces and three-quarters avoirdupois, which enabled him to ascertain the peculiar mechanism by which the feet of this animal can keep their hold of a smooth, hard, perpendicular wall, and carry up so large a weight as that of its body.

The foot has five toes, at the end of each of which, except that of the thumb, is a very sharp and much-curved claw; on the under-surface of each toe are sixteen transverse slits, leading to so many cavities or pockets, the depth of which is nearly equal to the length of the slit that forms the orifice; they all open forward, and the external edge of each opening is serrated, like the teeth of a small-toothed comb. The cavities, or pockets, are lined with a cuticle, and the serrated edges are also covered with it. The structure just described is supplied with various muscles, whose action is to draw down the claw, open the orifices of the pockets, and turn down the serrated edges upon the surface on which the animal stands. Upon examining attentively the under-surface of the toes, when the pockets are closed, Sir Everard Home was struck with their resemblance to the surfaces of that portion of the *Echineis remora*, or sucking fish, by which it attaches itself to the shark, or to the bottom of ships; and it consequently suggested the probability of obtaining, from an examination of this latter apparatus, much useful information which might be applicable to the subject of the lizard, more especially as the parts of which it is composed are so much larger, and therefore more within the reach of anatomical examination.

The surface on the top of the head of this fish, fitted for adhesion, is of an oval form, and bears a considerable proportion to the size of the whole animal; it is surrounded by a broad, loose, moveable edge, capable of applying itself closely to the surface on which it is placed: and it is evident that, when the external edge is so applied, and the cartilaginous plates are raised up, the interstices must become so many vacua, and the serrated edge of each plate will keep a sufficient hold of the substance on which it rests to retain it in that position, assisted by the pressure of the surrounding water, without a continuance of muscular exertion. It thus appears that the adhesion of the *sucking fish* is produced by so many vacua being formed through an apparatus worked by the voluntary muscles of the animal, and the pressure of the surrounding water.

From the similarity of the mechanism of the under-surface of the toes of the *lacerta gecko*, there can be no doubt that the purpose to which it is applied is the same: but as in the one case the adhesion is to take place under water, and is to continue for longer periods, the means are more simple; in the other, where the mechanism is to be employed in air, under greater disadvantages with respect to gravity, and is to last for very short periods, and then immediately afterwards to be renewed, a more delicate structure of parts, a greater proportional depth of cavities, and more complex muscular structure become necessary.

Having ascertained the principle on which an animal of so large a size as the *lacerta gecko* is enabled to support itself in its progressive motion against gravity, Sir E. Home felt himself more competent to inquire into the mechanism by which the common fly is enabled, with so much facility, to support itself in still more disadvantageous situations. In the natural size the feet of the fly are so small, that nothing can be determined respecting them; Keller was the first person who made a drawing of the fly's foot in a highly-magnified state, in which the concave surfaces are visible, and which, no doubt, like those of the lizard above described, are employed to form vacua, which enable the fly to move under such disadvantageous circumstances. Mr Bauer, who has so greatly distinguished himself in microscopic researches, was judiciously enlisted into the service of Sir E. Home upon this occasion; and he has shown that this principle, on which progressive motion against gravity depends, is very extensively employed by nature in the structure of the feet of insects; and Sir Everard observes, that now this structure is known, it can be readily demonstrated by looking at the movement of the feet of any insect upon the inside of a glass tumbler, through a common magnifying glass; the different suckers are readily seen separately to be pulled off from the surface of the glass, and reapplied to another part.

In consequence of the expedition to

the polar regions, Sir E. Home was enabled to obtain and examine the foot of the walrus, in which he detected a resemblance in structure to that of the fly; and it is not a little curious that two animals so different in size should have feet so similar in their use. In the fly, the parts require to be magnified one hundred times to render the structure distinctly visible; and in the walrus, the parts are so large as to require being reduced four diameters, to bring them within the size of a quarto page.

Nor is progressive motion the only function in which Nature avails herself of the pressure of the atmosphere for the accomplishment of her purposes. The act of feeding is continually effected in this manner. The operation of sucking is too familiar to require comment. It may not, perhaps, be so generally known, that it is by the very same process that bees reach the fine dust and juices of hollow flowers, like the honeysuckle, and some species of foxglove, which are too narrow to admit them. They fill up the mouth of the flower with their bodies, and suck out the air, or at least a large portion of it, by which the soft sides of the flower are made to collapse, and the juice and dust are squeezed towards the insect, as completely as if the hand had pressed it externally. It is by a similar process that the oyster is enabled to close its shell so firmly; for, if a hole be bored in it, it may be opened without the least difficulty.

NOTE 33, p. 143.

Accidental Discoveries, and of Inventions suggested by the Analogies of Nature.

"Art lives on Nature's alms."

Those who are not acquainted with the operations by which the mind is enabled to arrive at truth, are too apt to attribute to accident that which is the result of great intellectual labour and acuteness. Observation, analogy, and experiment are the three great stepping-stones by which the philosopher is enabled to ascend from darkness to light: it is true that his foot may accidentally be placed upon the first, but his own efforts are required to complete the ascent. To the mass of mankind the preliminary step is obvious, and they at once conclude that the succeeding ones are equally easy and simple. In this view of the subject, it was *by accident* that Sir Isaac Newton discovered the laws of gravitation, for his mind was directed to the investigation by the accidental fall of an apple from its tree; it was *by accident* that Galileo discovered the isochronous movement of the pendulum, for it was suggested by the vibration of a chandelier: but how many persons might have witnessed the fall of an apple, or the vibration of a chandelier, without arriving at similar truths! It has been said that we are indebted for the important invention in the steam-engine, termed *hand-gear*, by which its valves or cocks are worked by the machine itself, to an idle boy of the name of Humphrey Potter, who, being employed to stop and open a valve, saw that he could save himself the trouble of attending and watching it, by fixing a plug upon a part of the machine which came to the place at the proper times, in consequence of the general movement. If this anecdote be true, what does it prove? That Humphrey Potter might be very idle, but that he was, at the same time, very ingenious. It was a contrivance, not the result of accident, but of acute observation and successful experiment. Again, one of the most important improvements, the condensation of steam by the injection of a shower of cold water directly into the cylinder, was discovered by *a leakage*, letting in the water where it was never intended to penetrate. Glass is said to have been discovered by persons having accidentally kindled a fire on the sandy shore with sea-weed, when the alkali from the ashes united with the silex of the sand. In like manner the history of pottery is mixed up with an unusual amount of tales which attribute discoveries to accident; as, for instance, the servant of a potter was boiling brine in an earthen pan, and, the fire being fierce, and she careless, the saline solution boiled over, when, by the action of the intense heat, the alkali combined with the earth; and hence the origin of salt-glaze. Pliny tells us that *minium*, or red lead, was first recognised in consequence of a fire that took place at the Piræus at Athens, where some *ceruse*, which had been exposed to the fire, had been found converted into a red substance. The method of purifying sugar with clay is asserted to have been the result of accident: a hen, having her feet dirty, had gone over a pot of sugar, and the sugar under her tread was found whiter than elsewhere. The idea of mezzotinto engraving is recorded as having struck Prince Rupert while he was watching a soldier scouring a rusty breastplate. A thousand such fertile accidents might be enumerated, but sufficient has been said to combat a popular but mischievous error; and we are happy at finding the same feeling expressed in a work* which, from its extensive circulation, must prove highly useful in correcting it "Very few discoveries," says the author, "have been made by chance and by ignorant persons; much fewer than is generally supposed. They are generally made by persons of competent knowledge, and who are in search of them. The improvement of the steam-engine by Watt resulted from the most learned investigation of mathematical, mechanical, and chemical truths. Arkwright devoted many years, five at least, to his invention of spinning-jennies. The new process of refining sugar, by which more money has been made in a shorter time, and with less risk and trouble, than was perhaps ever gained by an invention, was discovered by Mr Howard, a most accomplished chemist; and it was the fruit of a long course of experiments, in the progress of which, known philosophical principles were constantly applied, and one or two new principles ascertained."

Then, again, the originality of an invention has been questioned, from the fact that Nature had adopted a similar mechanism in some of her works. Let us illustrate our meaning by a reference to two of the most stupendous architectural wonders of the age—THE CRYSTAL PALACE, and THE TUBULAR BRIDGE. Sir Joseph Paxton, in describing the construction of the former, states that the large umbrella-shaped leaves of the *Victoria regia* suggested to him the means of giving to it stability. "If you examine," says he, "this leaf, and compare it with my models and drawings, you will perceive that Nature has provided it with longitudinal and transverse girders and supporters." In the construction of the TUBULAR BRIDGE it was found that the rectangular was much stronger than the circular beam. If this fact were not suggested, it was at least confirmed by Nature. But before we proceed to its explanation, be pleased, gentle reader, to take up your pen, not the unfledged steel instrument of the present day, but the veritable goose-quill of our grandfathers. Are you prepared? if so, observe how the square shaft is disposed so as to impart the greatest strength to that part of the feather most exposed to the strain in flight; while, as it extends towards the body of the bird, and becomes of less importance as to its power of resistance, the rectangular is tapered down to the circular form, apparently to prevent the sharp angles from lacerating the body of its active bearer. The beam is not hollow, but, to preserve its form, it is filled with a pithy substance, clumsily imitated by art in those *gusset*-pieces and *angle-irons* introduced to add strength to the square beam.

We might add numerous other instances of the same kind; such as the *Ball and Socket-joint*—the *Flexible Water-main*, suggested to Mr Watt by the mechanism of the lobster's tail—the plan of tunnelling through the bed of the Thames, by the operation of the *teredo* —the improvement in the manufacture of our paper, so as to obtain toughness by long fibres, from the process adopted by the wasp—the art of *shotting* silk, from the wing of the butterfly, &c.; affording a striking testimony to the celebrated aphorism of Robert Hooke, that "Nature is generally the best guide for Art;" or, in the words of the poet, that

"Art lives on Nature's alms."

But let it be remarked that it is one thing to adopt the suggestions of Nature, which may be regarded as the common property of all, and another to copy and appropriate the inventions of our fellows, and by ingeniously disguising them, as gipsies do their stolen children, to make them pass as their own. Such has been too frequently the case in the present day: workmen, as candidates for employment, have entered the factories, and surreptitiously stolen ideas, and taken out patents for inventions to which they had no honest claim: thus realising the fable of Æatus and Polyclea, who, as our classical readers will remember, were informed by the Oracle that the one who first touched the land, should obtain the kingdom. Polyclea appeared lame and disabled, and appealed to the kindness of her brother to carry her across on his shoulders: no sooner, however, had they arrived on the opposite side, than Polyclea leaped ashore from the back of Æatus, and exclaimed that the kingdom was her own.

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* "Library of Useful Knowledge."

NOTE 34, p. 144.

Rarefied State of the Atmosphere in the Higher Regions.

This rarefied state is not only shown by the barometer, which is a very faithful measure of the air-pressure (p. 146), but by phenomena which may not have been duly regarded; it may therefore be advisable to explain them. That water should boil at a lower temperature in an elevated region, was a fact consistent with theory, and proved by experiment; but until the experiments of Archdeacon Wollaston, it was not known that the elevation of a few feet could be thus indicated. He constructed an apparatus by which the height of St Paul's was ascertained. Water, *in vacuo*, boils at 88° Fahr.; on the summit of Mont Blanc, at 187°; and it has been stated that the monks of St Bernard complain of not being able to make good bouilli—they certainly could not make good tea—in that elevated region. The town has lately been amused by Mr Albert Smith's graphic account of his ascent to the summit of Mont Blanc; and if we may be allowed to gain knowledge at the expense of our sympathies, we may tell our readers, that when this adventurous gentleman, in a state of exhaustion, anticipated the delight of a refreshing draught of champagne, the contents of the bottle were forcibly ejected and lost, the moment its cork had been withdrawn.

> "Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat
> Flumina."[*]

The great fatigue experienced by persons ascending the higher regions has received an additional explanation from the philosophical discovery of Dr Edward Weber, that the head of the thigh-bone cannot be separated by the mere weight of the limb from the surface of the articular cavity, to which it is accurately adapted: but that in all its motions it is retained close to the articular surface by *the pressure of the atmosphere*. All the muscles which surround the hip-joint may be divided, but the weight of the limb does not remove the head of the bone from its cavity; but if a hole be bored into the cavity, or it be exposed under an air-pump, the separation will take place. It is evident, therefore, that, in all the movements of rotation, the head of the bone is retained in its place by atmospheric pressure. In ascending very high mountains, where the air is greatly rarefied, the muscular force must on that account be increased in order to maintain the head of the bone in its cavity, and hence the peculiar kind of fatigue experienced by such persons. All sounds are materially modified in such regions: the discharge of a pistol is not louder than a pop-gun; the human voice undergoes a similar change, and an opera-singer would be very much surprised on hearing her own musical notes. The rate of combustion is also modified by altitude. This was first ascertained by the difference of time in the burning of the fuses of shells at Bangalore, and other places, when it was found that combustion was retarded at considerable elevations. Quartermaster Mitchell, who communicated the fact to the Royal Society, attributes it to the deficiency of oxygen; but, according to the experiments of Sir H. Davy, we are induced to refer it to the want of heat in rarefied air.

NOTE 35, p. 144.

Weight of the superincumbent Ocean.

If we include the pressure of the atmosphere, a body at the depth of 100 feet would sustain that of sixty pounds on the square inch; while one at 4000 feet, a depth by no means considerable, would be exposed to a pressure of about 1830 pounds. We need not, therefore, feel surprised, that on the foundering of a ship at sea, though its timbers part, not a spar floats to the surface; for if the hull has sunk to a great depth, all that is porous is penetrated with water or greatly compressed. Captain Scoresby states that when, by the entangling of the line of the harpoon, a boat was carried down with the whale, it required after it was recovered two boats to keep it at the surface. Sir J. Herschel has recorded a melancholy anecdote, which may well be adduced in further illustration of our subject:—"After the invention of the diving-bell, and its success in subaqueous processes, it was considered highly desirable to devise some means of remaining for any length of time under water, and rising at pleasure without any assistance. Some years ago an ingenious individual proposed a project by which this end was to be accomplished. It consisted in sinking the hull of a ship made quite water-tight, with the decks and sides strongly supported by shores, and the only entry secured by a stout trap-door, in such a manner that, by disengaging from within the weights employed to sink it, it might rise of itself to the surface. To render the trial more satisfactory, the projector himself made the first essay. It was agreed that he should sink in twenty fathoms of water, and rise again without assistance at the expiration of twenty-four hours. Accordingly, making all secure, and provided with the means of making signals to indicate his situation, this unhappy victim of his own ingenuity entered and was sunk. No signal was made, and the time appointed elapsed. The pressure of the water at so great a depth had, no doubt, been completely under-estimated, and the sides of the vessel being at once crushed in, the unfortunate projector perished, before he could even make the signal concerted to indicate his distress." At the present time the subject of the ocean's pressure, at its different depths, derives a peculiar interest, from its possible bearing upon the successful submersion of the electrical submarine-cable for telegraphic communication with America.

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[*] Horat. Sat. i, 509.

NOTE 36, p. 156.

The Cause of Iridescence.

If a soap-bubble be blown up, and set under a glass, so that the motion of the air may not affect it, as the water glides down the sides and the top grows thinner, several colours will successively appear at the top, and spread themselves from thence in rings down the sides of the bubble, till they vanish in the same order in which they appeared; at last, in consequence of the film becoming too attenuated to reflect light, a black spot appears at the top, and spreads till the bubble bursts."* Hence it follows that the colours of a body depend in some degree upon the thickness and density of the particles that compose it; and that, if the density be changed, the colour will likewise be changed. That the production of colours depends upon the nature of the surfaces upon which light falls, is beautifully exemplified by the iridescence of mother-of-pearl; and which has been satisfactorily shown to depend upon a singular peculiarity in the structure of that substance. On its surface, which to the unassisted eye, and even to the touch, appears to be finely polished, there are innumerable little lines, or *grooves*, in some places as many as two or three thousand in the space of an inch, which, lying parallel, regularly follow each other in all their windings; by the edges of which the rays of light are reflected, and the continual change of colour arises from their continual bendings. Whatever doubts might have existed upon the subject, some late experiments of Sir David Brewster have dissipated them, by showing that the colours which play so beautifully on the surface of mother-of-pearl, may be communicated by pressure to sealing-wax and several other substances. The discovery of this fact was in some measure accidental: he had stuck a piece of mother-of-pearl on a cement made of rosin and bees'-wax, and on separating the cement he found that it had acquired the property of exhibiting colours. Several persons who witnessed the effect concluded that it arose from the presence of a thin film of the mother-of-pearl, which might have scaled off and adhered to the wax: but such an explanation was at once refuted by plunging the wax in acid, which must have dissolved the mother-of-pearl, had any been present; but the acid had no effect, and the colours of the impression remained unimpaired. It is clear, then, that the grooves, as Sir David Brewster conjectured, occasioned the iridescence in the mother-of-pearl, as well as in the waxen impression. In consequence of this curious discovery, Sir John Barton succeeded in producing the same appearance on glass, and on different metals, by simply cutting grooved lines on their surface. These lines are so fine, that without a microscope they are scarcely visible, and the glass and the metal appear to retain their polish: yet they and the colours also may be communicated by an impression, like those from the mother-of-pearl to the wax. In like manner, the varying and delicate hues exhibited by the wings of certain butterflies arise from the action of light upon the parallel and equidistant striæ upon their surfaces. To Sir David Brewster science is not only indebted for optical discoveries of the highest value, but for a clear and comprehensive history of this fascinating department of natural knowledge. We strongly recommend his "Treatise on Optics." *Edit.* 1853.

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* This also confirms the observation (p. 155) regarding the tendency of the lather to gravitate towards the depending part of the bubble.

NOTE 37, p. 174.

Vegetable Barometers.

The following are a few of those plants which indicate changes in the weather:—

Chickweed is an excellent *barometer.** When the flower expands fully, we are not to expect rain for several hours; should it continue in that state, no rain will disturb the summer's day. When it half conceals its miniature flower, the day is generally showery; but if it entirely shuts up, or veils the white flower with its green mantle, let the traveller take the hint and put on his greatcoat. The different species of *trefoil* always contract their leaves at the approach of a storm; so certainly does this take place, that these plants have acquired the name of the *husbandman's barometer.*

The tulip and several of the compound yellow flowers also close before rain. There is, besides, a species of wood-sorrel, which doubles its leaves before storms and tempests. The *bauhinia,* or mountain ebony, *cassia,* and sensitive plants, observe the same habit.

NOTE 38, p. 175.

Saint Swithin.

The popular adage of *Forty days' rain after St Swithin* is a tradition which seems to have derived its origin from the following circumstance:—Swithin, who held the office of chancellor under two Anglo-Saxon kings, and was preceptor to Alfred the Great, was also bishop of Winchester, and died in 862. He desired that he might be buried in the open churchyard, and not in the chancel of the minster, as was usual with other bishops, and his request was complied with; but the monks, on his being canonized, considering it disgraceful for the saint to lie in a public cemetery, resolved to remove the body into the choir, which was to have been done with solemn procession on the 15th of July. It rained, however, so violently for forty days together at this season, that the design was abandoned. And thus has St Swithin figured in our Protestant Calendar as the *Jupiter Pluvius* of our Saxon ancestors. "Now, without entering into the case of the bishop," says Mr Howard, in his work on the "Climate of London," "who was probably a man of sense, and wished to set the example of a more wholesome, as well as a more humble mode of resigning the perishable clay to the destructive elements, I may observe that the fact of the hindrance of the ceremony by the cause related is sufficiently authenticated by tradition; and the tradition is so far valuable, as it proves that the summers in this southern part of our island were subject, a thousand years ago, to occasional heavy rains, in the same way as at present." Mr Howard has shown, by a table, that the notion commonly entertained on this subject, if put strictly to the test of experience, at any one station in this part of the island, will be found fallacious: he, however, very justly observes, that "the opinion of the people on subjects connected with Natural History is commonly founded, in some degree, on fact or experience;" and to do justice to the popular observation in question, he states that, "in a majority of our summers, a showery period, which, with some latitude as to time and local circumstances, may be admitted to constitute daily rain for forty days, does come on about the time indicated by this tradition; not that any long space before is often so dry as to mark distinctly its commencement." It is recorded that, while presiding over the erection of a bridge, near his city of Winchester, a poor old woman complained to St Swithin that some workmen had broken all her eggs; whereupon the good bishop restored them all, according to the popular legend, which thus converted a simple act of charity into a miracle by which the broken eggs became whole.

NOTE 39, p. 176.

The Whale.

Did the whale understand his own power, he would easily destroy all the machinery which the art of man could devise for catching him; it would be only necessary for him to swim on the surface in a straight line in order to break the thickest rope; but the fish, on being struck by the harpoon, obeys a natural instinct, which, in this instance, betrays him to his death. Sir H. Davy, in his "Salmonia," observes that the whale, not having an air-bladder, can sink to the lowest depths of the ocean, and, mistaking the harpoon for the teeth of a sword-fish or a shark, he instantly descends, this being his manner of freeing himself from these enemies, who cannot bear the pressure of a deep ocean; and, from ascending and descending in small space, he thus puts himself in the power of the whaler—*See Note* 35.

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* This term is used in its popular acceptation, and does not necessarily imply a change in the *weight* of the air.

NOTE 40, p. 179.

Flying by Artificial Wings.

From men of consummate genius, like Robert Hooke, down to the most humble and luckless schemer, has the accomplishment of flight by artificial appliances been an object of ardent pursuit, but hitherto of impossible attainment. If we except the unwearying search after the philosopher's stone, and the invention of perpetual motion, there is not a subject that has inspired such sanguine hopes, and led to such bitter disappointment. The false analogy which convinced Dr Johnson's Rasselas of the possibility of flying, has betrayed many a mechanical genius to his ruin—"*He that can swim needs not despair to fly:—to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler.*"—Dr Robert Hooke, to associate with whose name the idea of failure is little less than profanation, was induced, by the earnest promptings and encouragement of Bishop Wilkins, to attempt the construction of artificial wings; but his sagacity soon discerned the cardinal difficulty opposed to any such scheme,—that of the inadequacy of the muscular powers of man to wield such machinery as might overcome gravity, by exciting an adequate reaction of the air. He tells us that in the year 1658, he had contrived means to enable persons to fly, and had made a model which, by the aid of springs and wings, raised and sustained itself in air;[*] but finding by his own trials, and afterwards by calculation, that the muscles of a man's body were not sufficient for that purpose, he contrived a way to make artificial muscles, "divers designs whereof," he says, "I showed to Dr Wilkins, but was in many of my trials frustrated." His plan, it would appear, was to fasten succedaneous wings, not unlike those of bats, to the arms and legs, as well as a contrivance to raise him up by means of horizontal vanes, placed a little aslope to the wind, which being blown round, turned an endless screw in the centre, which helped to move the wings, to be managed by the person thus raised aloft; and it would appear from a paper in 1674, that he had not then abandoned his efforts.[*]

Bishop Wilkins, who must be regarded as the chief instigator, was eager to realize his favourite dream of visiting the moon, and possibly of entering into a treaty of commerce with her inhabitants, was not to be dismayed by failure; and there probably does not exist another book so replete with amusing absurdity as that entitled "*The discovery of a New World; or, a Discourse tending to prove that 'tis probable there may be another habitable world in the Moon: with a Discourse of the possibility of a passage thither.*" Had its philosophy been as rational as its learning was profound, it would have commanded our respect; as it is, we can only grieve to find such an amount of mental power so unworthily expended. The way in which he combats and parries each difficulty as it arises is certainly amusing: he contends that it would be only necessary to raise the body by wings a few miles to escape from the magnetical influence of the earth, and that "a man might there stand as firmly in the open air as he can now upon the ground; and not only so, but also move with a far greater swiftness than any living creature here below." No food he thinks would be required during his aërial journey, since no exhaustion would be produced by exertion. Besides which, he thinks, the air itself, purified from all the gross impurities of earth, would sufficiently sustain his life.

"——— Si vescitur aura
Ætherea."

Should the scheme of flight by wings fail, he falls back upon other resources for raising the body beyond the sphere of the earth's magnetical vigour; as, for instance, by riding like Sinbad upon such a gigantic bird as Marcus Polus relates is to be found in Madagascar, called the *Ruck*, "that is," he prudently adds, "if such a bird really exists."

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[*] Could this have resembled the '*Flying-Top*,' described in the text, p. 189?

[*] Waller's "Life of Robert Hooke."

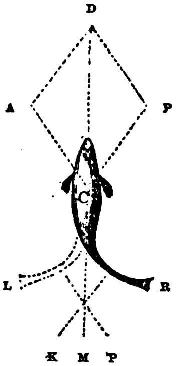
His next proposition is a "*Flying Chariot*, in which a man might sit and give such a motion unto it as shall convey him through the air, and carry a *viaticum*, and commodities for traffic"—for traffic with the Lunarians! The late Sir W. Congreve, of Rocket celebrity, entertained the idea of a flying raft, to be actuated by windmills; but notwithstanding his naturally aspiring instincts, he was far less ambitious than the volant Bishop of Chester, for, in a conversation with the author of the present note, he stated that he did not intend that it should sail higher than what might be sufficient to clear the church spires and other elevated obstacles.

NOTE 41, p. 181.

Progressive Motion in Fishes; Boats impelled by Paddling, Rowing, &c.

To render the subject to which this note refers further intelligible, we may show the means by which a fish moves forward in the water. The accompanying diagram and demonstration are from Dr Roget's "Bridgewater Treatise."

The tail is the principal instrument by which the progressive motion is effected. Thus—suppose that the tail is inclined to the right; if, in this situation, the muscles of the left side, tending to bring the tail in a right line with the body, are suddenly thrown into action, the resistance of the water, by reacting against the broad surface of the tail, in the direction P R, perpendicularly to that surface, will cause the muscular action to give the whole body an impulse in that direction; and the centre of gravity, C, will move onwards in the direction C B, parallel to P R. This impulse is not destroyed by the further flexion of the tail towards the left side, because the principal force exerted by the muscles has already been expended in the motion from R to M, in bringing it to a straight line with the body; and the force which carries it on to L is much weaker, and therefore occasions a more feeble reaction. When the tail has arrived at the position L, indicated by the dotted outline, a similar action of the muscles on the right side will create a resistance and an impulse in the direction of K L, and a motion of the whole body in the same direction, C A. These impulses being repeated in quick succession, the fish moves forward in the diagonal C D, intermediate between the direction of the two forces.



Upon the same principle a boat is impelled by paddling; and the action of the rudder of a ship in turning the vessel will be readily understood. In this latter case, however, there is an additional mechanical advantage; since the point round which the vessel turns is beyond the middle and towards the prow, and hence the force applied at the extremity of the keel acts as by an arm of a lever.

NOTE 42, p. 182.

Flight of insects.

The command possessed by insects, in directing and changing their course, seems more perfect even than that of birds. Many of them travel on their wings to immense distances, and, considering their comparative size, they generally move through the air with greater velocity than that of birds. Bees have been known to fly great distances from their hive, in search of food; and the silk-worm moth has travelled more than a hundred miles in a very short space of time. Many of our readers have, no doubt, noticed with surprise the apparent facility with which gnats have accompanied them, although they may have been advancing on horseback at a full gallop; and the author, during the last summer, has been forcibly struck with the manner in which flies and other insects have kept up with a railway carriage, alternately flying in and out of the vehicles, as though they had been at perfect rest. Some species possess a remarkable power of poising themselves in the air, and hovering for a length of time over the same spot, without falling or rising, advancing or retreating: the *Dragon-fly* affords a striking example of this fact.

NOTE 43, p. 183.
A Geometric Proposition.

This fact may be demonstrated by converting the triangle into a parallelogram, of which one of the sides of the triangle will become its diagonal: the other two sides will of course represent two forces equivalent to such diagonal, which, acting in opposition to it, must produce a balance.

NOTE 44, p. 185.
Kite Messengers.

The curious experiments of Mr Faraday upon the optical effects produced by the revolutions of different wheels, might be exhibited by arrangements adjusted as messengers.

NOTE 45, p. 188.
Blowing Hot and Cold.

It may be presumed that most persons have observed that after having blown out a taper, it may be readily rekindled by again blowing upon the yet glowing wick;* but we suspect that but few of such observers are prepared to give a philosophical explanation of it.† In truth, all the phenomena connected with the structure and burning of a common candle teem with so much scientific interest, that, had not this volume exceeded the limits originally assigned to it, the author would have invited the reader's attention to them; but at present we can only deal with its flame, the structure of which may be readily seen by placing behind it the strong light of an Argand lamp, and throwing its shadow upon the wall, whence we shall learn that it is an elongated bubble, the exterior of which, being in contact with the air, alone burns, while its interior is filled by a magazine of combustible vapour. As soon as the wick is ignited, it melts a certain portion of the wax or tallow, and forms a cup or crater, from which combustible matter, for the supply of the flame, is continually drawn up by the capillary action of the wick.—When a candle is "*blown out*," this bubble is mechanically separated, and driven off from the wick; and its supply of combustible vapour having been so withdrawn, it is necessarily extinguished. By blowing upon the yet glowing wick, still enveloped in an inflammable atmosphere, we suddenly direct upon it a stream of fresh air, and, by thus raising its temperature, rekindle the hot vapour that continues to flow from it; so that it may be said we "*blow it out*" mechanically, and "*blow it in*" chemically.

This explanation is in some respects opposed to that of Sir H. Davy, who says, when we blow out a candle, the extinction is produced by the cooling power of the current of air projected into the flame. The answer is, that a blast of hot air will puff it out.

NOTE 46, p. 188.
Winds and Storms—Cyclones.

The sea and land breezes which occur in the islands of the torrid zone very strikingly illustrate the position laid down in the text, and afford a good explanation of the manner in which winds may be occasioned by a change of temperature in the air. In these, during the hottest part of the day, the wind sets in from all quarters, and appears to be blowing towards the centre of the island, while in the night it changes its direction, and blows from the centre of the land towards the sea; for, since the sun's rays produce much more heat by their reflection from land than they do from water, that portion of the air which is over the land will soon become heated, and will ascend; a rarefaction and diminution of the quantity of air over the central part of the land will be thus occasioned, which must be supplied from the sides; but, as the land cools again during the night, that portion of air which had been previously heaped up will begin to descend, and by spreading and equalizing itself, will produce a breeze blowing from the centre.

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* This is the more remarkable in the small green wax taper in common use. When the flame is blown out, the wick will continue red-hot for some hours, which does not happen with the white or red taper. This fact has been supposed to depend upon the metallic colouring of the former (an oxide of copper) yielding a portion of its oxygen.

† It is recorded of St Gudule, a Flemish saint, that she had the faculty of being able, when her candle was extinguished, to blow it in again; and it is added, that was the only miracle ever performed by that lady-saint. She would have performed a greater miracle had she explained it. She is usually represented in pictures with a lantern.

The *trade-winds*, so called from the advantage which their certainty affords to trading-vessels, are another example of the same kind; they are generally stated to blow from east to west over the equator, and are occasioned by the rarefaction of the air by the sun's heat and the motion of the earth from west to east. While writing the present note, we have seen an essay upon the subject by Captain Basil Hall, published in an appendix to Mr Daniell's admirable work on Meteorology; the perusal of this paper has induced us to cancel what we had written, and to refer the reader to the essay itself, for it is quite impossible to do justice to the views it entertains in the limited space necessarily prescribed to us in this note.

On the coast of Guinea the wind always sets in upon the land, blowing westerly instead of easterly: this exception arises from the deserts of Africa, which lie near the equator, and, being a very sandy soil, reflect a great degree of heat into the air above them, which being thus rendered lighter than that which is over the sea, the wind continually rushes in upon the land to restore the equilibrium.

Among the irregular winds, or those which are not constant, but accidental, may be noticed the *whirlwind*, the *harmattan*, and the *sirocco*. The first of these is occasioned by the meeting of two or more currents of wind from opposite directions, and which can only be occasioned by some temporary but violent disturbance of equilibrium. The *harmattan* is met with on the western coast of Africa, and is generally attended by great heat and fog: it appears to be occasioned by a conflict between the heated sands of Africa, and the regular direction of the trade-winds over that continent, and, by disturbing their progress, it is frequently the forerunner of a hurricane in the West Indies. The *sirocco* occurs in Egypt, the Mediterranean, and in Greece, and is chiefly characterized by its unhealthy qualities. The air, by passing over the heated sands of Egypt, becomes so dried and rarefied as to be scarcely fit for respiration, and, being thus prepared, it absorbs so much humidity on passing the Mediterranean as to form a suffocating and oppressive kind of fog.

Mr Daniell observes, that the currents of a heated room in some measure exemplify the great currents of the atmosphere. If the door be opened, the flame of a candle held to the upper part will show, by its inclination, a current flowing outwards; but if held near the floor, it will be directed inwards. If the door be closed suddenly from without, it moves with the incoming current, and against the outgoing, and a condensation of air takes place in the room; which is proved by the rattling of the windows, and the bursting open of any door in the room, if slightly closed. If the door closes from within, it moves against the incoming current, and with the outgoing, and a rarefaction of the air in the room takes place; which is evidenced by the rattling of the windows, and the bursting open of another door in the contrary direction.

Meteorology has been long considered the least perfect branch of natural knowledge: so apparently capricious and irregular are its phenomena, that philosophers had almost abandoned the idea of bringing them under the operation of any general laws. Brighter lights are, however, now dawning upon us. Dr Whewell, in his "Bridgewater Treatise," has explained the manner in which the various currents of the atmosphere maintain a necessary balance in the distribution of heat and moisture around the globe, and has thus reduced to order and design phenomena which have hitherto been regarded as unconnected and fortuitous. Lieut.-Col. Reid, by his late happy investigation of the Law of Storms, will, no doubt, lead us into a novel path of the most important discoveries. He has satisfactorily proved, by a mass of evidence derived from numerous log-books, that storms obey fixed laws. His attention was ardently directed to the subject by having been at Barbadoes immediately after the great hurricane of 1831, which in the short space of seven hours killed upwards of 1400 persons on that island alone. The discoveries of Colonel Reid may be thus briefly stated:—That hurricanes are whirlwinds of great diameter (*cyclones*), always revolving according to an invariable law, viz., from right to left (supposing yourself standing in the centre), or in the opposite way to the hands of a watch, in the northern hemisphere, and in a contrary direction in southern latitudes; at the same time they have a progressive motion in a curved line, and as they advance their diameters appear to enlarge and their violence to diminish: it has been also found that in the centre of the vortex there is a lull or calm. Colonel Reid observes that the simplest mode of illustrating the subject is to cut out concentric circles, so as to represent progressive whirlwinds, by moving which over any tract the veering of the wind will be easily understood. The reader may form a more familiar idea by causing the water to circulate in a basin, which will represent the violent circular motion of the storm-wind, with a calm in the centre of the vortex. Suppose this to be also moving onward at a rate of about seven miles an hour, and he will have a correct notion of the subject. Since the storms expand in size and diminish in force as they proceed towards the poles, and the meridians at the same time approach each other, gales become huddled together; and hence, apparently, the true cause of the very complicated nature of the winds in our latitude. Observations would also appear to render it probable that there exists an accordance of the force of storms with the law of magnetic intensity: for example, it is at its minimum at St Helena, where storms never occur; on the contrary, the lines of greatest intensity seem to correspond with the latitudes of typhoons and hurricanes. To what important discoveries may not the pursuit of this inquiry lead us!

The practical importance of the foregoing facts must be obvious: to use the expression of Sir John Herschel, "they will teach seamen how to steer their ships, and save thousands of lives." They will thus learn on which side to lay-to a ship in a storm, for by watching the veering of the wind, they will ascertain the direction in which it is falling; if violent and the changes sudden, the ship will probably be near the centre of the vortex; whereas, if the wind blows a great length of time from the same point, and the changes are gradual, it may reasonably be supposed the ship is near the extremity of it. The barometer also becomes a very important instrument upon these occasions; the rapid rotatory motion of a column of the atmosphere necessarily occasions its fall, and this fall is always greatest at the centre of the storm. When it begins to rise, the centre has passed; and when the wind has sufficiently abated to enable a ship to make sail, she may then bear away with safety; but near the middle of the hurricane, before the barometer begins to rise, all square sails must be dangerous.

With respect to the velocity of wind, as mentioned at p. 189, we may here observe that the apparent motion of the clouds is a fallacious test; since we cannot take any account of their distance. The sail of a windmill sweeps past the spectator close to it with lightning speed, whereas when seen at the distance of some miles, it seems to revolve with extreme slowness; a difference which varies with the angular visual space passed through in the same time.

NOTE 47, p. 193.

Ancient Archery.

We are reminded, upon this occasion, of part of a stanza in the well-known ballad of "Chevy Chace," where an English archer aimed his arrow at Sir Hugh Montgomery:—

> "The *grey goose wing* that was thereon
> In his hearte's blood was wett."

The more ancient ballad, however, reads *swane-feathers*. In the "Geste of Robyn Hode," among Mr Garrick's old plays, in the Museum, the arrows of the outlaw and his companions are particularly described:—

> "With them they had an hundred bowes,
> The strings were well ydight;
> An hundred shefe of arrows good,
> With heades burnish'd full bryght;
> And every arrowe an ell longe,
> With *peacocke* well ydight,
> And rocked they were with white silk:
> It was a semely sight."

And Chaucer, in the description of the squyer's yeoman, says,—

> "And he was clad in cote and hode of greene;
> A sheafe of *peacocke* arrows, bright and shene,
> Under his belt he bare full thriftely,
> Well coude he dresse his tackle yemanly:
> His arrowes drouped not with fethers lowe,
> And in his hand he bare a mighty bowe."
> *Prol. to Cant. Tales.*

In order to show the dandyism displayed by the archers of former times, it may be stated, that, in the wardrobe accounts of the 28 Edw. I., p. 359, is a charge for verdigris to stain the feathers of the arrows green. A wardrobe account of the 4 Edw. II. furnishes an entry for peacock arrows, "Pro duodecim flecchiis cum pennis de *pavone*, emptis pro rege de 12 den."

Note 48, p. 208.

Sound heard under Water.

In Quartermaster Conolly's "History of the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners," an anecdote is related which well illustrates this subject:—"One of their most dramatic undertakings was the submarine destruction of the *Royal George*. This operation was carried on during several successive seasons, and tried the courage of divers as bold as Persians, who were hung in chains at the bottom of the sea, while they made up faggots of timber and spars. During one of these experiments, a curious fact was ascertained:—Corporal Jones, wearing a diving-helmet, was fathoms below the surface, forcing his way through the dangerous intricacies of the wreck, when he heard a voice singing,—

> 'Bright, bright are the beams of the morning sky.'

"The corporal recognised the voice of private Skelton, who was rummaging through the dislocated hull of the *Royal George*, for copper-sheathing, iron-ballast, and brass guns. He met, and actually chatted with him, under an enormous weight of billows."

Note 49, p. 208.

Sound conveyed by Solid Bodies.

A beautiful experiment was instituted at Paris, to illustrate this fact, by Biot. At the extremity of a cylindrical tube, upwards of 3000 feet in length, a ring of metal was placed, of the same diameter as the aperture of the tube; and in the centre of this ring, in the mouth of the tube, was suspended a clock-bell and hammer. The hammer was made to strike the ring and the bell at the same instant, so that the sound of the ring would be transmitted to the remote end of the tube through the conducting power of the matter of the tube itself; while the sound of the bell would be transmitted through the medium of the air included within the tube. The ear being then placed at the remote end of the tube, the sound of the ring, transmitted by the metal of the tube, was first distinctly heard; and, after a short interval had elapsed, the sound of the bell, transmitted by the air in the tube, was heard. The result of several experiments was, that the metal of the tube conducted the sound with about ten and a half times the velocity with which it was conducted by the air; that is, at the rate of about 11,865 feet per second.

Note 50, p. 221.

Expressive Music.

The biographer of Josquin des Prez, the celebrated musician and *maestro di capella* to Louis XII., King of France, relates an anecdote which may be here told in connexion with the present subject. When Josquin was first admitted into the service of the French monarch, he had been promised a benefice by his Majesty; but this prince, contrary to his usual habits, for he was in general both just and liberal, forgot the promise he had made; when Josquin, after suffering great inconvenience from the shortness of his Majesty's memory, ventured by the following expedient to remind him publicly of his promise, without giving offence. He had been commanded to compose a motet for the Chapel Royal, on which occasion he selected part of the 119th Psalm,—"*Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo,*"—"*O think of thy servant as concerning thy word,*"—which he set in so supplicating and exquisite a manner, that it was universally admired, particularly by the King, who was not only touched by the music, but felt the words so effectually, that he soon afterwards granted his petition, by conferring on him the promised preferment. For which act of justice and munificence, Josquin, with equal felicity, composed as a hymn of gratitude another part of the same Psalm,—"*Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo, Domine,*"—"*O Lord, thou hast dealt graciously with thy servant.*"[*]

Josquin, among musicians, was the giant of his time, and seems to have arrived at universal monarchy and dominion over the affections and passions of the musical part of mankind; indeed, his compositions were as well known and as much practised throughout Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as those of Handel were in Europe sixty years ago.

Note 51, p. 226.

Imaginary Forms, or Chance Resemblances; and Imaginary Sounds.

The following case, quoted by Sir David Brewster, in his work on "Natural Magic," from the life of Peter Heaman, a Swede, who was executed for piracy and murder at Leith in 1822, will afford a very curious example of the influence of imagination in creating distinct forms out of an irregularly-shaped surface:—"One remarkable thing was, one day as we mended a sail, it being a very thin one, after laying it upon deck in folds, I took the tar-brush and tarred it over in the places which I thought needed to be strengthened. But when we hoisted it up, I was astonished to see that the tar I had put upon it represented a gallows and a man under it without a head. The head was lying beside him. He was complete, body, thighs, legs, arms, and in every shape like a man. Now, I oftentimes made remarks upon it, and repeated them to the others. I always said to them all, 'You may depend upon it that something will happen.' I afterwards took down the sail on a calm day, and sewed a piece of canvas over the figure to cover it, for I could not bear to have it always before my eyes." Thus may be explained how Theodoric saw in the head of a fish which was served up to him, that of Symachus, whom he had unjustly executed.

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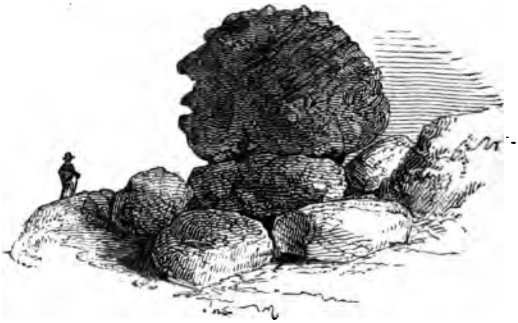
[*] The *ballad* was originally a mission to awaken men to their duty; for βαλλεῖν signified to *send forth*, to preach, or to prophesy.

The curious effect of chance resemblance was particularly remarked by Leonardo da Vinci in the moss and stains on old stones, so that persons wholly unacquainted with drawing have been thus enabled by such imaginary guides to sketch a number of clever figures upon a wall so stained. It is told of Protogenes, a painter of Rhodes, that, having been engaged to represent a dog panting and with froth in his mouth, after many unsuccessful attempts, in a fit of despair, he threw his wet sponge at it, and thus produced an appearance which, with a little assistance from his brush, accomplished the design. In our own times, this faculty of the imagination has not unfrequently been enlisted into the service of the fortune-teller for purposes of fraud and imposition. The following story is related on credible testimony:—"A British officer, in expectation of promotion, and of being united to a lady in marriage, sought a gipsy fortune-teller. The sorceress, no doubt, had made herself well acquainted with these circumstances. On entering the room, she ordered a large glass of spring-water, into which she poured the white of a newly-laid egg. After shaking the mixture for some time, she so far succeeded as to induce the credulous observer to declare that he saw most distinctly the image of the ship in which he was to hoist his flag, the church in which he was to be married, and his bride going with him into the church."—(*The Gipsies' Advocate*, by J. Crabb.) In certain cases the chance resemblance is so striking, as to require little or no aid from the imagination to complete the figure. A son of the author, who lately made a pedestrian tour through Wales, has furnished him with the accompanying faithful portrait of a rocky prominence, which may be seen at the foot of Snowdon, on the road from Beddgelert to Caernarvon.



——————— Uti de marmore cœpto
Non exacte satis, rudibusque simillima signis.*

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* ——————"Marble so appears
Rough-hewn to form a statue, ere the hand
Completes the change."—*Ovid. Metam.* lib. i.

Hence may have originated *Rock Idols*. Cornwall abounds with such objects, to which many legendary tales are attached, and, with a dim mist and faint moonlight, the imagination will not require the aid of glamour, nor the spells of the Lapland Witch, to convert the looming masses on the wild moors into shapes of mysterious bearing:

> "While the mists
> Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
> And phantoms from the crags."
> *Excursion.*

So, again, the grotesque forms to be seen on the gnarled boughs of the forest may have readily suggested the idea of Sylvan Genii and Wood Demons. The figured marks visible on sections of the pebble evidently gave rise to the cameo.

The floral kingdom will also supply many very remarkable instances of what may be said to be "chance resemblances," although we are far from being prepared to say that they are not designs premeditated by Nature for some wise purpose. We more particularly refer to the *Orchideæ*, the animal shape of whose blossoms is singularly striking: thus we have flies, bees, spiders, butterflies, &c., so naturally represented as to require no aid of the imagination to realise their forms. At Leigh Park, the seat of Sir George Staunton, we have lately seen, in the splendid conservatories of that accomplished baronet, the Mexican *Peristeria*, in whose corolla appears a dove, with its wings and beak assuming a reality that is perfectly astonishing.

It may not be out of place to observe, that fancy plays as many tricks upon the ear as upon the eye, and that we have imaginary sounds, as well as imaginary forms: thus we have the midnight blast, bearing in its cadences the echoing sounds of mysterious voices; while phantom-bells are rung in the ears of our mariners by imaginary sea-nymphs, and we have, as Milton tells us—

> "The airy tongues that syllable men's names
> On shores, in desert sands, and wildernesses."

Groves and forests, from the rustling sound of their leaves and branches, have ever been a fruitful source of such hallucinations, and, according to Gray, "the beeches dream out their old stories to the wind." It was thus that the oaks of Dodona gave out oracles; while, to the fancy of the poet, the wintry murmurs of the forest are her audible mournings for the loss of offspring cut off by the blasts of Autumn. There are few of us who have not fancied intelligible sentences pronounced by a peal of bells, and to have thus realised the story of Whittington, listened to with such interest in the days of our boyhood.

Nor is the sense of *touch* free from deceptive impressions, which may be shown by the following experiment mentioned by Aristotle:—Let the reader cross his middle and fourth finger, and place a small object, as a pea, at the point of intersection, and he will immediately perceive the presence of two *peas*. An intelligent boy, on being shown this trick, exclaimed—"Why, this is squinting with the fingers!" If the reader demands a philosophical explanation of the phenomenon, we will endeavour to afford it. When the pea is thus placed in an artificial position in respect to the fingers, we perceive two convex surfaces opposed to each other, and as the mind concludes that two convexities so related cannot belong to one sphere, the imagination converts them into two. This experiment leads us to consider a similar false perception incident to the sense of sight. When an object is so artificially presented to the eye as to form an image inconsistent with the one which experience has taught us to expect, by optically rendering their shadows incompatible with the known laws of light, the mind by an intuitive action seeks to rectify the anomaly, and may thus become the source of its own illusion.

As a special instance, we will suppose that a seal, with a head cut in the usual concave figure, be placed on a table with the light from a window or a candle on our right hand; should its shaded side appear on the same side with the light, the mind, by a very short process of reasoning, concludes that the image is an *Intaglio*, that is, sunk or concave; if now, without altering the direction of the light, the same impression be viewed through any combination of lenses that will invert it, the shady side will be reversed, and now appear to be farthest from the window, when the mind will as readily reverse its judgment, and the depression will assume the appearance of an elevation, the *Intaglio* becoming, as realised, a *Cameo*, as its waxen impression would be; and so powerful is this illusion, that even the sense of touch, which has been universally held as the vigilant guardian of the eye's truth, will not be able to dispel it. Sir David Brewster, in his "Natural Magic," has entered very fully into the philosophy of this experiment, showing the influence of the mind over the testimony of the senses.

Note 52, p. 228.

Fairy Rings.

Dr Wollaston, in a paper published in the "Philosophical Transactions" (1807, p. 133,) relates some interesting observations he made on the progressive changes of these rings, and which satisfactorily explain their origin. He observed that some species of fungi were always to be found at the exterior margin of the dark ring of grass if examined at the proper season. The position of the fungi led him to believe that progressive increase from a central point was the probable mode of formation of the ring; and he thought it likely that the soil which had once contributed to the support of fungi might be so exhausted as to be rendered incapable of producing a second crop. The defect of nutriment on one side would occasion the new roots to extend themselves solely in the opposite direction, and would cause the circle of fungi continually to proceed, by annual enlargement, from the centre outwards The luxuriance of the grass follows as a natural consequence, as the soil of an interior circle is enriched by the decayed roots of fungi of the preceding year's growth. During the growth of fungi, they so entirely absorb all nutriment from the soil beneath, that the herbage is often for a while destroyed, and a ring appears bare of grass, surrounding the dark ring; but, after the fungi have ceased to appear, the soil where they had grown becomes darker, and the grass soon vegetates again with peculiar vigour. Dr Wollaston had many opportunities of remarking that, when two circles interfere with each other's progress, they do not cross each other, but are invariably obliterated between the points of contact. The exhaustion occasioned by each obstructs the progress of the other, and both are *starved;* a circumstance which affords a strong confirmation of the above theory.

Note 53, p. 231.

Resonance.

In order to comprehend the theory of *reciprocated vibration,* or *resonance,* let the reader keep in his remembrance the analogy between musical vibration and the oscillation of the pendulum, as explained at page 210. If he well understands the phenomena of the latter, he will readily comprehend those of the former. Galileo observed that a heavy pendulum might be put in motion by the least breath of the mouth, *provided the blast were often repeated, and made to keep time exactly with the vibrations of the pendulum:* from the same sympathetic communication of vibrations will two pendulum clocks fixed to the same wall, or two watches lying upon the same table, take the same rate of going, though they would not agree with one another if placed in separate apartments. Mr Ellicot indeed observed that the pendulum of one clock was even able to stop that of the other; and that the stopped pendulum, after a certain time, would resume its vibrations, and in its turn stop the vibrations of the other. We have here a correct explanation of the phenomena of *Resonance;* for the undulations excited by a vibratory body are themselves capable of putting in motion all bodies whose pulses are coincident with their own, and consequently with those of the primitive sounding body; hence the vibrations of a string, when another, tuned in unison with it, is made to vibrate.

Upon this fact is founded a very affecting story by Kotzebue. The lover of a young lady died. His harp, on which he had been accustomed to accompany her, hung neglected in her chamber. After a long period of grief she again touched the chords of her instrument; the lover's harp, tuned in accordance, responded, which impressed her with the superstitious belief that his spirit swept the strings in sympathy. A scientific friend, however, more philosophically than wisely, explained to her the principal of phonic harmonies: from that hour the dear illusion vanished—her harp was heard no more—she drooped and died. Well might she have exclaimed with Horace, "*Pol me occidistis!*" —the classical reader will complete the quotation.*

Upon the same principle does the resonance, or reciprocated vibrations, of columns of air depend. We are much indebted to Mr Wheatstone for our knowledge of this branch of acoustics: he has shown, that if a tuning-fork or a bell be sounded before a tube enclosing a column of air of the necessary length, the original sound will be augmented by the rich resonance of that air; and that the sounds of tuning-forks, if held before the cavity of the mouth, may be reciprocated most intensely by adjusting the alterable volume of air contained within it to the pitch of the instrument; by placing, for instance, the tongue, &c., in the position for the nasal continuous sound of *ng* (in song,) and then altering the aperture of the lips until the loudest sound was obtained, he readily accomplished his object.

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* ——— "Ah! cruel friends, *she* cried,
Is this to save me? Better far have died,
Than thus be robb'd of pleasure so refined,
The dear delusion of a raptured mind."
Hor. Epist. B. ii. Epist. 2

If two vibrating tuning-forks, differing in pitch, be held over a closed tube, furnished with a movable piston, either sound may be made to predominate, by so altering the piston as to obtain the exact column of air which will reciprocate the required sound. The same result may be obtained by selecting two bottles (which may be tuned with water,) each corresponding to the sound of a different tuning-fork; on bringing both tuning-forks to the mouth of each bottle alternately, that sound only will be heard, in each case, which is reciprocated by the unisonant bottle; or, in other words, by that bottle which contains a column of air susceptible of vibrating in unison with the fork.

Among the Javanese instruments brought to England by the late Sir Stamford Raffles, there is one called the *gender*, in which the resonances of columns of air are employed to augment, we might also say to render audible, the sounds of vibrating metallic plates. Under each of these plates is placed an upright bamboo, containing a column of air of the proper length to reciprocate the lowest sound of such plate. If the aperture of the bamboo be covered with pasteboard, and its corresponding plate be struck, a number of acute sounds only (depending on the more numerous subdivisions of the plate) will be heard; but, on removing the pasteboard, an additional deep rich tone is produced by the resonance of the column of air within the tube.[*]

It is only by a knowledge of this principle that the theory of the Guimbarde, or Jew's-harp, can be well understood.

A striking instance of the power of *resonance* has been recorded of a person who, by a clear and powerful voice, was enabled to break several tumbler-glasses in succession, by singing the fundamental note proper to each close to them.

NOTE 54, p. 231.

The Jew's-Harp.

The Memoirs of Madame de Genlis first made known the astonishing powers of a poor German soldier on the Jew's-harp. This musician was in the service of Frederick the Great, and finding himself one night on duty under the windows of the king, played the Jew's-harp with so much skill, that Frederick, who was a great amateur of music, thought he heard a distinct orchestra. Surprised on learning that such an effect could be produced by a single man with two Jew's-harps, he ordered him into his presence; the soldier refused, alleging that he could only be relieved by his colonel; and that, if he obeyed, the king would punish him the next day for having failed to do his duty. Being presented the following morning to Frederick, he was heard with admiration, and received his discharge and fifty dollars. This artist, whose name Madame de Genlis does not mention, was called Koch; he had not any knowledge of music, but owed his success entirely to a natural taste. He made his fortune by travelling about, and performing in public and private; and retired at Vienna at the advanced age of more than eighty years. He used two Jew's-harps at once, in the same manner as the peasants of the Tyrol; and produced, without doubt, the harmony of two notes struck at the same moment, which was considered by the musically-curious as somewhat extraordinary, when the limited powers of the instrument were remembered. It was Koch's custom to require that all the lights should be extinguished, in order that the illusion produced by his playing might be increased.

It was reserved, however, for Mr. Eulenstein to acquire a musical reputation from the Jew's-harp. After ten years of close application and study, this young artist obtained a perfect mastery over this untractable instrument. In giving some account of the Jew's-harp, considered as a medium for musical sounds, we shall only present the result of his discoveries. This little instrument, taken singly, gives whatever grave sound you may wish to produce, as a *third*, a *fifth*, or an *octave*. If the grave tone is not heard in the bass Jew's-harp, it must be attributed not to the defectiveness of the instrument, but to the player. In examining this result, you cannot help remarking the order and unity established by nature in harmonical bodies, which places music in the rank of exact sciences. The Jew's-harp has three different tones; the bass tones of the first octave bear some resemblance to those of the flute and clarionet; those of the middle and high to the *vox humana* of some organs; lastly, the harmonical sounds are exactly like those of the *harmonica*. It is conceived that this diversity of tones affords already a great variety in the execution, which is always looked upon as being feeble and trifling, on account of the smallness of the instrument. It was not thought possible to derive much pleasure from any attempt which could be made to conquer the difficulties of so limited an instrument; because, in the extent of these octaves, there were a number of spaces which could not be filled up by the talent of the player; besides, the most simple modulation became impossible. Mr Eulenstein has remedied that inconvenience by joining sixteen Jew's-harps, which he tunes by placing smaller or greater quantities of sealing-wax at the extremity of the tongue. Each harp then sounds one of the notes of the gamut, diatonic or chromatic, and the performer can fill all the intervals, and pass all the tones, by changing the harp. That these mutations may not interrupt the measure, one harp must always be kept in advance, in the same manner as a good reader advances the eye, not upon the word which he pronounces, but upon that which follows.

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[*] The air-bladder of fishes, in addition to other uses (p. 145,) serves the purpose of increasing by *resonance* the intensity of the sonorous undulations communicated from the water to the fish; and in many species the bladder has an immediate connexion with the labyrinth of the ear; and in other cases the connexion takes place through the vertebræ.

NOTE 55, p. 245.

Verbal Telegraph.

This project has been revived: in a number of the *Revue Encyclopédique* there is a proposal to communicate verbal intelligence, in a few moments, to vast distances; and this not by symbols, as in the Telegraph, but in distinct articulate sounds uttered by the human voice. The plan is said to have originated with an Englishman, Mr Dick, according to whose experiments the human voice may be made intelligible at the distance of twenty-five or thirty miles. It has been stated, in Note 49, that the celebrated Biot had ascertained that sound travels more than ten times quicker when transmitted by solid bodies, or through tubes, than when it passes through the open air; at the distance of more than half a mile the low voice of a man was distinctly heard. Father Kircher relates in some of his works, that the labourers employed in the subterranean aqueducts of Rome heard each other at the distance of several miles. The invention of the Electrical Telegraph had, it was supposed, consigned all such schemes[*] to Lethe; but it has lately been, in some degree, revived by the exhibition of the "Telephonic Concert,"[†] see p. 327, and Note 49.

NOTE 56, p. 245.

Electrical Telegraph.

"Thought-executing fires."—*Lear.*

The following note is reprinted, as far as it is marked with inverted commas, just as it appeared in the earlier editions of this work, long before the subject had attracted any notice, or, indeed, before any railroad had been constructed. It is curious to feel how wonderfully the anticipation there expressed has been realized:—

"It has often occurred to the author of these pages, during his reveries, that the means of conveying intelligence with immense rapidity may be hereafter invented by the Electrician. Should a system of railways be established throughout the country, it might lead to some expedient by which such a desideratum could be accomplished through the medium of electrical discharges. Upon this subject we have accidently fallen upon a curious notice in Arthur Young's 'Travels in France' (vol. i. p. 65):—'M. Lomond has made a very curious discovery in electricity; you write two or three words on a paper, he takes it with him into his room, and there turns a machine enclosed in a cylindrical case, at the top of which is an electrometer of pith-balls; by means of a wire a connexion is made with a similar cylinder and electrometer in a distant apartment, and his wife, by remarking the corresponding motions of the balls, writes down the words they indicate; from which it appears that he has formed an *Alphabet of Motion.* As the length of the conducting wire makes no difference in the effect, a correspondence might be carried on at any distance; as, for example, within or without a besieged town; or for purposes much more interesting and useful. Whatever the uses may be, the invention is beautiful.'"

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[*] Amongst these schemes was one constructed on the principle of water always keeping its own level; as, for example, suppose a leaden pipe to pass between two distant places, and to have a perpendicular tube to each extremity; then if the pipe be constantly filled with water to a certain height, it will always rise to its level on the opposite end; and if but one inch of water be added at one extremity, it will almost instantly produce a similar elevation in the tube at the other end; so that by corresponding letters being adapted to the vertical tubes, at different heights, intelligence may be quickly conveyed.

[†] In 1823, Mr Wheatstone made the important discovery that sounds of all kinds might be transmitted perfectly and powerfully through solid wires, and reproduced in distant places. (*Journal of Royal Institution*, 1823.)

But what shall we say of the instrument described by *Farnianus Strada,* the elegant Jesuit, in his rhetorical prolusions; which instrument resembles, in every respect, *with the exception of the conducting wires,* the Electrical Telegraph of Mr Wheatstone! The necessity of wires, as a material medium of communication, was considered unnecessary, from a belief that the magnets would sympathise with each other, whatever might be the intervening distance. The following are the observations of Sir T. Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," on this very curious subject:—"The conceit is excellent, and, if the effect would follow, somewhat divine, whereby we might communicate like spirits, and confer with Menippus in the moon. And this is pretended from the sympathy of two needles touched with the same loadstone, and placed in the centre of two circles, or rings, with letters described round about them; one friend keeping one, and another friend the other, and agreeing upon an hour wherein they will communicate; for then saith tradition, at what distance of place soever, when one needle shall be removed unto any letter, the other, by a wonderful sympathy, will move unto the same. But, herein, I confess my experience can find no truth; for having expressly framed two circles of wood, and according to the number of the Latin letters divided each into twenty-three parts, placing therein two needles composed of the same steel, touched with the same loadstone, and at the same point,—of these two needles, whenever I removed the one, although but at the distance of half a span, the other would stand like Hercules' pillars." Having thus demonstrated, experimentally, the fallacy and utter failure of the scheme, he concludes with a very candid and rational apology:—"Now, this magical conceit, how strange soever, might have some original in reason; for men, observing no solid whatever did interrupt the action of the magnet, might be induced to believe no distance would terminate the same."

The Electrical Telegraph, as at present worked, is unquestionably the greatest wonder the world ever witnessed, and the highest triumph ever achieved by science; nor has even familiarity, that most potent of all disenchanters, as yet dissolved the spell that rivets our imagination, and perpetuates our astonishment; its miraculous agency, indeed, daily becomes an object of increasing wonder, as "our nimble spirit" extends the magic girdle, which is shortly destined to encircle the wide world, and at once to annihilate time and space. Even during the progress of the present little book through the press, wires, for the first time, have been carried along the bed of the sea, and, unlike the wand and book of Prospero, have lost no power by their immersion. While preparing this present edition, we are informed by the *Times,* that an electric communication has been completed throughout the whole of the East India Company's dominion; the length of wire extending no less than 3500 miles; through forests and across torrents; and we are informed, from another source, that the Mediterranean Company have issued their plans of extension from Algiers to the western coast of India, and from Pegu to Australia and Van Diemen's Land. In a few weeks their line will connect London with the capital of French Africa.

The ink was scarcely dry on this page, when we were again startled by the following paragraph in the *Times,* headed "DIRECT TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LONDON AND ST PETERSBURG.—Since the re-establishment of commercial relations between Great Britain and

Russia, the Electric and International Telegraph Company have received despatches direct from St Petersburg, within a second of their leaving that capital; the length of wire being about 1700 miles. The medium by which the messages were conveyed is the printing telegraph, and simultaneously with the necessary touch of the finger on the instrument at St Petersburg, the words indicated appear on a similar instrument at the Lothbury or Strand stations in London. This is the greatest telegraphic feat yet achieved through the medium of the submarine wires, and indicates the progressive and rapid extension of instantaneous communication. The direct transmission of messages between London and the other principal continental cities is now a matter of daily occurrence."

In the flush of our success, and in the pride of our conquest, let us not forget the master-spirits to whom our obligations are justly due. Let us bow humbly at the shrine of Oersted of Copenhagen, the immortal discoverer of electro-magnetism; let us do all honour to Faraday for his consummation of that discovery, by having been the first to draw electric sparks from the magnet; and let us as duly acknowledge the services of Wheatstone, in seizing and taking captive this subtle power, so as to render it subservient to the will of man, by the construction of the Electric Telegraph. All honour to this great triumvirate! *

NOTE 57, p. 254.

The Yule Log, the Christmas Tree, and the Mistletoe Bough.

The *yule log* is a billet of wood that, from time immemorial, has been burnt on Christmas-eve to enliven the family circle with its ruddy blaze; and the custom is still perpetuated in many of the rural districts:—

> "The village matron, round the blazing hearth,
> Suspends the infant audience with her tales,
> Breathing astonishment!"

It is evidently a relict of Northern mythology; in which the circling year was symbolized by a wheel, closing only to recommence its round. This annual burnt-offering is therefore, properly speaking, the *wheel-log*, the word wheel having been derived from *Iuel*, and corrupted into *yule*.

The *Christmas tree*, so generally displayed at this festive season, dates its origin from a period very far antecedent to the Christian era, and serves well to show, not only how heathen customs and ceremonies have been consecrated for Christian purposes, but how the changes have accommodated themselves to the varying circumstances of the age and countries through which they have been transmitted: thus in Egypt the palm-tree being known to put forth a shoot every month, a spray of that tree, with twelve shoots on it, was appropriately selected at the time of the winter solstice, as a symbol of the year completed; but, on passing to the south, and reaching Italy, the palm was necessarily lost, and a branch of the fir was substituted, which, on account of the conical or pyramidal form of its summit, was considered most appropriate for the purpose of a winter tree; and since the Roman *Saturnalia* were celebrated at the period of the winter solstice (from the 17th to the 21st of December), so into this tree was now imported one of the most distinguishing emblems, and lighted tapers, in honour of Saturn, were accordingly suspended from its branches. Next came the festival of "*Sigillaria*," on which days it was customary to present impressions stamped on wax ("*Oscilla*"), and which still form a part of the furniture of our own Christmas tree.* On passing into Christendom, the tree became the symbol of our great Christian festival, and very naturally received various additions emblematic of our faith: it is now almost universal in Scandinavia and Germany, and its traces are to be found in Spain. Such is the history of the origin and historic growth of the pagan tree, and its passage into the Christmas memorial; and it is interesting to observe how its emblems of adverse faith have, in the progress of time, all harmoniously united to do homage to our Christmas festival.

The *mistletoe bough* suspended from the ceiling at Christmas is regarded as a remnant of Druidical superstition, although it must be confessed that the youth of the present day takes more interest in its continuance than the antiquary does in its origin. If it be no longer regarded as the provident shelter for sylvan genii, during the blasts of winter, it is recognized as a merry snare for the capture of jovial spirits around the Christmas hearth; and if it has ceased to confer a mysterious charm, it at least sanctions a very agreeable and harmless privilege, that of saluting any female who may be luckily caught beneath its hallowed shadow. From the fact of the mistletoe not growing on the ground—from not *being of the earth, earthy*—it has enjoyed a certain mystical virtue: thus Virgil has alluded to it;[*] and that the same idea entered into Scandinavian mythology appears in the legend of Baldar, "beloved by the whole world," and whom all that grew or lived on the earth's surface had sworn never to injure: but, unfortunately, the mistletoe that did not grow on the earth's surface had been overlooked, and Baldar was accidently killed by a bough of it, wantonly thrown at his breast during the winter solstice.

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* This note was written before the Atlantic cable was laid down.—*Ed.*

* "Oscilla ex altâ suspendunt mollia pinu."—*Georg.* 2, 389.

NOTE 58, p. 303.

Carrier Pigeons.

The *carrier* is a variety of the common domestic pigeon, and which, from the superior attachment that it shows to its native place, is employed in many countries as the most expeditious courier. The letters are tied under its wing, it is let loose, and in a very short space returns to the home it was brought from, with its advices. This practice was much in vogue in the East; and at Scanderoon, till of late years, it was used, on the arrival of a ship, to give the merchants at Aleppo a more expeditious notice than could be done by any other means. In our own country, these aërial messengers have been employed for a very singular purpose, having been let loose at Tyburn at the moment the fatal cart was drawn away, to notify to distant friends the departure of the unhappy criminal.

In the East, the use of these birds seems to have been greatly improved, by having, if we may use the expression, relays of them ready to spread intelligence to all parts of the country: thus it is stated by Ariosto (Canto 15), that the governor of Damiata circulated the news of the death of Orrilo. "As soon as the commandant of Damiata heard that Orrilo was dead, he let loose a pigeon, under whose wing he had tied a letter. This fled to Cairo, from whence a second was despatched to another place, as is usual; so that, in a very few hours, all Egypt was acquainted with the death of Orrilo."

But the simple use of them was known in very early times. Anacreon tells us (Ode ix.), that he conveyed his billet-doux to Bathyllus by a dove.

Taurosthenes also, by means of a pigeon he had decked with purple, sent advice to his father, who lived in the isle of Ægina, of his victory in the Olympic games, on the very day he had obtained it.[*] And, at the siege of Modena, Hirtius without, and Brutus within the walls, kept, by the help of pigeons, a constant correspondence; baffling every stratagem of the besieger, Antony, to intercept their couriers. During the siege of Haarlem, when that city was reduced to the last extremity, and on the point of opening its gates, a design was formed to relieve it, and the intelligence was conveyed to the citizens by a letter which was tied under the wing of a pigeon. In the times of the crusades there are many more instances of these birds of peace being employed in the service of war: Joinville relates one during the crusade of *Saint Louis*, and Tasso another during the siege of Jerusalem.

In the old days, coasting sailors sometimes took pigeons with them, and when at fault would let one fly, which it did at once to the land. The late mysterious loss of the Pacific would suggest the expediency of reviving such a practice.

The Dutch variety is the most valuable, a pair of the best kind being worth from five to eight pounds. It is lighter than the English pigeon, and flies nearly as fast again. It proceeds at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and has been known to complete a journey of 800 miles; but this, it is presumed, is not continuous, but assisted by occasional rest. The bird learns but one lesson; it may carry from Antwerp to London or to any other place, but it will only pass between two such places. It evidently travels by sight: when tossed, it circles, then rises in a spiral, observes its route, and darts off. It will not fly at night; and, should the day be foggy, it is delayed, and sometimes lost.

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[*] *Æn.* vi. 205.

[*] *Ælian. V. r. Hist.*, lib. ix. c. 2. Pliny, lib. x. c. 24, says that swallows have been made use of for the same purpose. Their rate of flight has been estimated at a mile in a minute for ten hours, or 600 miles per day.

NOTE 59, p. 306.

The Remote and often Obscure Origin of Customs, Ceremonies, and Current Expressions.

Not a day passes in which we do not witness a ceremony, perform an act, or use a phrase, of whose origin and import we have not any satisfactory and intelligible conception. Memories, long since expired in history, may still lie entranced in a custom, linger in a proverb, or be even embodied and embalmed in a single word. So truly has it been said that "words are fossilized thoughts, left stranded on the shores of Time." In the progress of this work the reader (thanks to our vicar) has met with several well-characterized instances, and the very limited and desultory character of these notes forbids any lengthened exposition. In fact, these notes should only be regarded as finger-posts to direct him to the *diggings*, and should the author accompany him on the road, it is only for the sake of a little instructive gossip. With this understanding, then, we will remind him that, by a thoughtless word or an unmeaning act, he may unwittingly perpetuate the most ancient superstition, or become ancillary in preserving and illustrating the thoughts, rights, and practices of departed ages: thus, for example, when the farmer "*stipulates*" with his landlord, he is little perhaps aware that he recalls the ancient practice observed upon all occasions on which land changed hands, that of transferring a straw *stipula* from the estate by the seller to the buyer, as a pledge or earnest of the bargain. As little is the Pantaloon of pantomime aware that in his grotesque actions he is a veritable historian of the Venetian republic. When a man is denounced as an *assassin*, how very few know that they apply to him an epithet significant of the Arabic term for hemp, "*haschisch?*" a drug with which certain men of the Saracen army, during the wars of the Crusaders, became intoxicated, rushed into the Christian camp, and committed the most direful murders, being themselves regardless of life, whence they gained the appellation of "*Hashasheens.*" * In like manner, when we speak of one "*running amuck,*" we unknowingly allude to the Javanese, who, under the influence of the same narcotic, "*bang,*" run about in a state of wild fury, exclaiming, *Amok! Amok!* which in their language, signifies, *kill! kill!* The word "*Pagan*" tells us that villagers remained idolaters long after townsmen had become Christians. When we call a man a "*Dunce,*" we unwittingly assign to him the learning of a great logician of the middle ages; and should we complain of a lady's dress being "*tawdry,*" we intimate that it was bought at St Audrey's Fair. The term "*canter*" is derived from its being the favourite pace of the Canterbury Pilgrims. Thus do words whisper forgotten truths in the ear of the etymologist, as "little birds" have been said to whisper secrets in the nursery.

To pass to more familiar instances. How little does the fond mother, on suspending the coral toy around the neck of her infant, entertain the superstitious belief of the soothsayer, that its mystic virtue affords protection against the sinister influence of an *evil eye!* or that its silver bells, instead of affording amusement to the child, were designed to drive away evil spirits? Then, again, does the housewife, by placing the poker across the grate to draw up the fire, suspect that the custom was suggested by the belief, that by thus forming a *cross* with the bars the fire was protected from the malignant hostility of witches? But let us quit the cottage, and pass into the adjoining farm-yard; what do we find there to illustrate our subject? There stand a stable and cow-house with keys in their respective doors; to the one key is appended a naturally-perforated stone, to the other, a horn; can the ploughboy explain their meaning? Not he, he does but follow the practice of his predecessors without the least desire to know their meaning; he cares not to be told by the learned secretary of the Archæological Association,* that the perforated flint, the *holy stone*, or *hagstone*, is the talisman employed from the most remote time to guard the cattle from the attack of the fiendish Mora, or that the horn of the goat is the ensign and emblem of the sylvan deity Pan, the protector of cattle, and hence regarded as a potent charm, and fit appendage to the key of the stable and cowhouse.

That customs have survived the tradition of their origin might be proved by almost endless instances. The common practice of persons unable to write their names, making their *cross* to be regarded as a kind of manual oath, is derived from our Saxon ancestors, who affixed the sign of the cross as a signature to a deed, whether they could write or not. Several charters are still extant, to which kings, and persons of great eminence, affix, "*Signum crucis manu propriâ pro ignorantia literarum.*" Hence is derived the expression of *signing* instead of *subscribing* a paper, without reference to the inability or otherwise of the person concerned. So the physician of the present day heads his prescription with the letter ℞ which is supposed to stand for *recipe*, whereas it is in truth a relic of the astrological symbol of Jupiter, who is thus unintentionally invoked. We shall conclude this gossip by earnestly repeating our recommendation to the reader to study "*Lectures on the Study of Words,*" *by R. C. Trench, B.D., Dean of Westminster.*

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* We are now accustomed to associate the idea of hemp with the punishment rather than with the crime.

* "History of Keys," by H. Syer Cuming, Esq., Hon. Sec. Brit. Arch. Association.

Note 60, p. 310.

Invention of the Game of Chess.

Alphesadi, an Arabian writer, quoted by Montucla in his "Histoire des Mathématiques," expressly mentions the invention of chess as of Indian origin, and relates the following very curious Indian tradition:—Ardschir, king of the Persians, having invented the game of *Tric-Trac*, and being exceedingly vain of it, a certain Indian, named Sessa, the son of Daher, invented the game of chess, and presented his chess-board and chess-men to the king of the Indies. The sovereign was so much pleased, that he desired Sessa to name his reward; when this man made the apparently modest request, that he should receive as a gift so much corn as could be estimated by beginning with one grain, and doubling as many times as there were squares upon the chess-board, viz., 64. The king felt displeased at having his munificence thus slighted by a request so limited and so unworthy to be the gift from royalty; but, as Sessa remained firm, orders were given to the chief minister that he should be satisfied; when, however, the vizier had by calculation ascertained the enormous quantity of corn which would be required, he waited upon the king, and with some difficulty convinced him of the fact; upon which the king sent for Sessa, and said to him, that he admired his powers of calculation even more than the ingenuity of the game which he had presented to him, and, in respect to his promise as to the corn, he was compelled to acknowledge himself to be insolvent.

Dr Wallis, the friend of Sir Isaac Newton, and Savilian Professor of Oxford, found that the quantity of corn would be such as to be capable of forming a pyramid, the measurement of which would be nine English miles in height, and nine similar miles for each of the four sides of the base. After this, Montucla also states some elaborate calculations made by himself, and proves, amongst other remarkable facts, that the quantity of corn in question would cover 162,000 square leagues to the depth of one foot, French measure, which would be at least three times the extent of the surface of France as it was about the year 1796, and which he estimates at 50,000 square leagues.

Note 61, p. 316.

How to Poise an Egg on its End.

By smartly shaking the egg, we disorganise its contents, whence the heavier particles fall down; and thus, by lowering its centre of gravity, enable the egg to stand steadily on its base.

Note 62, p. 316.

The Magic Wand.

From remote antiquity the rod, or wand, has been regarded as the symbol, as well as the agent, of magical power. Bacchus had his *Thyrsus*,—Hercules his club;—Mercury, when sent on his missions to Æneas by Jupiter, took especial care to provide himself with the essential instrument of power:—

> "But first he grasps within his awful hand
> The mark of sovereign power—his MAGIC WAND:
> With this he draws the ghosts from hollow graves,
> With this he seals in sleep the wakeful sight,
> And eyes, tho' closed in death, restores to light."
> —*Æn.* iv.

Circe transformed the companions of Ulysses into swine by "the waving of her circling wand;" and thus spake her fabled son, Comus, in the "Mask" of Milton:—

> "If I but wave this *Wand*,
> Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
> And you a statue; or, as Daphne was,
> Root-bound, that fled Apollo."

And when the brothers interposed, they

failed to disenchant the lady from the chair, in consequence of having neglected to secure the *rod* of Comus :—

> "What! have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
> Oh, ye mistook; ye should have snatch'd his *Wand*,
> And bound him fast: without his Rod reversed,
> And backward mutters of dissevering power,
> We cannot free the lady."

Prospero, on abjuring his power,—

> "breaks his *Staff*,
> And buries it in certain fathoms of the earth."[*]

Æneas was only enabled to pacify the Infernal deities by the "*Fatalis Virga.*" In later times witches were supposed to repair to their "*Sabbath*," or assembly, on a magic rod or broomstick: and no conjuror of the present day would dare to appear before the audience without his conjuring-stick.—What, again, could Harlequin achieve without his wand? At this very day, too, the hazel-twig, or "*divining-rod*," is believed by many a Cornish miner to indicate by its movements the locality of subterranean treasures. Quitting the magical history of the rod, we find it introduced into our civil institutions as the emblematic symbol of authority: the King has his sceptre; the *mace* is borne before magistrates; the *verge* (*virga*) is carried before deans; and the *crosier* before bishops: then, again, we have the marshal's *baton*, which, when shortened, becomes a *truncheon* (*truncare*).

We now descend from these exalted insignia—forgive us, ye magnates of the bench!—to the barber's pole. Many of our younger, and perchance some of our elder readers, may not be aware that, before surgery assumed the dignity of a science, the barber performed the operation of "*letting blood*," and that a city company is still in existence under the denomination of "*Barber Surgeons.*" The pole, now rarely seen, except in rural districts and suburban byways, represents the staff held in the hand of the patient; and the rid riband coiled around it, the tape by which the arm was compressed during the operation.

Note 63, p. 321.

The Mysterious Lady.

We cannot be expected to run through all the categories of the ingenious system of ciphers by which the feats of this lady were performed; but we shall be able, by a general description of the scheme, aided by a few examples, to convey such a clear idea of its principles as will even enable our readers to practise it on a limited scale as an occasional evening pastime, beyond which it is not desirable to tax the mind for so unprofitable an object. It is interesting to observe to what an extent classification can abbreviate the labour of thought and memory. By an ingenious arrangement, it will be seen that any particular object which the lady may be called upon to name can be at once brought within a very limited list, and that her confederate will then be easily enabled so to frame his question as to make it indicate the required answer. The annexed table will serve as a specimen to illustrate the process. It will be seen that various objects, most likely to become the subjects of inquiry, are arranged in six distinct columns, each of which is denoted by a vowel, thus:—Numbers (*a*); Cards (*e*); Money (*i*); Trinkets (*o*); Food (*u*); Qualities, as *colour*, *figure*, &c. (*y*).

By aid of this arrangement, the first vowel which occurs in any short word uttered by the confederate secretly points out the column in which stands the object of inquiry: such words, for instance, as ATTEND—READY—LISTEN—COME—HUSH—YES, or TRY, will respectively indicate the desired column. This first advance towards the solution of the problem having been accomplished, the next step is to indicate the particular object in the column thus predicated, and this is performed by the initial letters of the words addressed to the lady by her confederate. For this purpose, the reader will, by reference to the table, observe that on its margin are placed the letters of the alphabet, *in pairs*, which are to be considered as equivalents—that is to say, the confederate is at liberty to avail himself of the one or the other, in order that he may have a wider range of signals at his disposal. It will also be observed that these equivalent pairs are arranged in divisions of fives, which, by thus rendering them referable to the thumb and fingers of the hand, will be found to facilitate the comprehension of the question; it will, besides, contract the range over which the mind has to glance on the instant;

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[*] Hence the herald breaks his staff of office, and buries it in the grave, at the funeral of a prince. "The lord high steward, after condemning Lord Strafford to death, *broke his white staff*, and the court was dissolved."—*Evelyn's Diary.*

for the lady, by knowing that all the letters after I J fall in the second division, and those after S T in the third, is at once enabled to discard from her consideration two-thirds of the list.

		CARDS.	MONEY.	TRINKETS.	FOOD.	QUALITIES, AS COLOUR AND FIGURE.
	a	e	i	o	u	y
A B	1	Clubs.	Farthing.	Brooch.	Cod.	Black.
C D	2	Diamonds.	Half-penny.	Card-case.	Eel.	Blue.
E F	3	Hearts.	Penny.	Pencil.	Sole.	Brown.
G H	4	Spades.	Threepence.	Penknife.	Turbot.	Green.
I J	5			Pincushion.	Whiting.	Red.
K L	6	Clubs.	Fourpence.	Purse.	Beef.	Yellow.
M N	7	Diamonds.		Ring.	Chicken.	White.
O P	8	Hearts	Shilling.	Seal.	Mutton.	Initials.
Q R	9	Spades.	Half-crown.	Smelling-bottle.	Pork.	Crest.
S T	10		Crown.	Thimble.	Veal.	Coat of Arms.
U V	11	Clubs.	Half-sovereign.		Tart.	
W X	12	Diamonds.	Sovereign.		Pudding.	
Y Z	13	Hearts.				

We shall now proceed to exemplify this explanation by a reference to the dialogue introduced in the text (page 321). In some instances the questions themselves point out the column, without the necessity of calling in the aid of the vowel-indication, as exemplified in questions 1, 2, 3, 4. With regard to the fifth question, it may be asked, by what means was the *queen* of clubs indicated? The reader is informed that the column of figures not only indicate abstract numbers, but any individual card in a suit. No 1, for instance, stands for the *ace*, and 11, 12, 13, for knave, queen, and king. In like manner, the first twelve figures are used to denominate the months of the year, as in question 13. Questions 6, 7, and 8 require the antecedent of a vowel to denote the column. In the sixth question, for instance, the vowel *i*, marking the third column, is announced by the exclamation, "Listen!" while the following word "Let" points out the article in that column to be a fourpenny piece. So, in the seventh question, the word "Come" intimates the fourth column, while the word "Pray" shows the article in question to be a *seal*. In question 9 the vowel is not required, because the column containing articles of food is indicated by the question; the initial B —Begin—points out *cod*. In question 12 the vowel is again required, and, accordingly, the word "Now" is used to signify the fourth column. The word "Mention" specifies a *ring*.

The scheme we have endeavoured to explain implies the necessity of the one who puts the questions, as well as the other who is to answer them, having their table by heart; but this is far from difficult, unless, indeed, it be extended to a great number of columns. The telegraphic letters, as we have shown, may be readily remembered; then the suits of cards are alphabetical, —the series of money according to value—the trinkets, again, alphabetical, as well as the different articles of food—and the qualities, as colour and figure; while the figures on seals are arranged according to their ascending complexity, as initials, crests, and coats of arms. With such assistance the succession of the different articles in each column is readily learnt and easily remembered.

But however extensive a table may be, it is impossible to provide for every article that may be submitted for trial; many of which are frequently of a singular nature, with a view to embarrass the performer. Our fifteenth question was introduced for the purpose of showing how the difficulty is to be encountered. The confederate, in such a case, has no other resource than to spell the word by initial letters.* This was accomplished in the question alluded to by a number of words in the form of an unpremeditated interjection; any other form of conversation or remonstrance between the confederate and the party may, however, be readily adopted. Let the reader refer to the words employed in our fifteenth question, and he will perceive that the word SQUIRREL was communicated to the lady without difficulty, thus:—

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* Or, still further to disguise the artifice, he might adopt the expedient of Julius Cæsar, who,

*S*omewhat *Q*uaint. *I*t's *R*emarkably *R*elieved. *E*very *L*ine.

NOTE 64, p. 324.

The Fire-King—The Incombustible Garment—The Spheroidal state of Liquids.

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that the garment, restored to its whiteness by the action of fire, was an incombustible cloth manufactured out of the fibres of the *Asbestos*, a mineral usually found in serpentine rocks, and which the ancients employed for the purpose of wrapping round the bodies of the dead, when exposed on the funeral-pile.

The extraordinary feats that followed are to be referred for explanation to a peculiar condition assumed by liquids, under the action of great heat, which has been termed "*spheroidal*," and which we shall hope to render intelligible to our readers.

Take a silver or metallic spoon, heat it to redness, or a little below that point, over a spirit-lamp, and in that state let some water be dropped into it; you will then observe that, instead of at once passing off in steam, it will float on the heated metal in a globular form: the fact is, that the water cannot come into actual contact with the heated surface, since it is separated from it by an unconducting layer of highly-elastic steam, generated on the first impulse, and which is sufficient to support the water in a globular form; but no sooner is the lamp withdrawn than the temperature falls to a certain point, at which contact takes place, and the water passes off in the state of steam: now, a liquid under such conditions is said to be in a "*spheroidal state.*"

It is a happy circumstance that philosophical phenomena, apparently of the most recondite character, may be frequently understood by an attentive observation of the most ordinary circumstances;* a red-hot cinder falling upon

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when he wrote secretly to any one, always made use of the *fourth* letter after that which he ought to have used—viz., as D for A, and E for B. Augustus used a similar plan, substituting, however, the letter *following* the right one, as B for A, and C for B. If a sentence be thus made to indicate a word, so has a single word, by the several letters of which it consists, been made the vehicle of a sentence crowded with meaning; thus, for instance, the word ἰχθύς, *fish*, was adopted by the early Christians under persecution, covertly to express the perilous sentence—"Ἰησους Χρὶστος Θεου υἱος Σωτηρ"—*Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour.* May we then venture to express an opinion, that the legend of the fishes assembling to hear the discourse of St Anthony might be only a myth to denote the presence of a Christian congregation?

* Of this we have lately received an exemplification, no less curious than convincing, in a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution, by Professor Tyndall, "On slaty cleavage, as the result of crystalline or polar forces;" a theory which he proposed to refute by showing that it was alone due to enormous pressure on surfaces of structural weakness, exerted at right angles to the planes of cleavage. And to this end, he sought no higher argument than that afforded by the slate of the schoolboy, the fracture of a biscuit, and the manufacture of puff-paste. Who has not observed the nodules, or whitish green spots, dotting the surface of the common writing-slate, over which the pencil slides as if they were greasy? These were originally mud rolled up into nodular masses, and if observed edgeways, are at once discovered to have been flattened by pressure, in the direction above indicated, and establish beyond doubt the concurrence of the phenomena of cleavage and pressure; "and thus," observes the professor, "do we elevate a common experience of our boyhood into evidence of the highest significance as regards one of the most important problems of geology." As to the proof indicated by the biscuit, he says—"I have never eaten one without an intellectual joy having been superadded to the mere sensual pleasure; for I have remarked on all such occasions, cleavage developed in the mass, by the rolling-pin of the pastry-cook. I have only to break these cakes, and to look at the fracture, to see the laminated structure of the mass." Then, again, he tells us that a lady friend initiated him into the mystery of manufacturing *puff-paste.* "If the cleavage of our hills be accidental cleavage, here is cleavage with intention: the volition of the pastry-cook has entered into the formation of the mass, and it has been his aim to preserve a series of surfaces of structural weakness, along which the dough divides into layers. Puff-paste must not therefore be too much handled, for then the continuity of the surfaces is broken; it ought to be rolled on a cold slab to prevent the butter from melting and diffusing itself through the mass, which would thus render it more homogeneous and less liable to split. This is the whole philosophy of *puff-paste;* it is a grossly-exaggerated case of slaty cleavage." Who after this will question the truth of Major Snapwell's remark (p. 252), that "there is philosophy even in our pies and puddings?" In short, to a philosophic observer there is scarcely an event, however trivial, nor an object, however humble and apparently insignificant, that will not suggest analogies, confirm or correct received theories, and unfold truths of the highest scientific interest. We are desirous of directing the reader's earnest attention to note 33, and to page 143 of the text, in further illustration of the subject.

water, swims upon its surface for some seconds, and then sinks with a hissing sound, and the sudden eruption of steam. In this case the heated body was isolated by a layer of vapour, as long as it retained a sufficiently high temperature to sustain the spheroidal condition. Again, who has not observed water, when accidentally dropped upon the heated bars or hobs of the grate, run along like globules of quicksilver? although it may not equally be well known that, if such globules be smartly struck with a hammer, the water, being thus suddenly and violently brought into contact with the hot iron, instantly flies off in the state of steam, and affords a striking proof of the theory of spheroidal action. With the knowledge of these facts, let us see whether we cannot satisfactorily explain the apparent miracles of the "FIRE ORDEAL," and of those feats of the Priestesses of Diana, recorded by Strabo, or those of the Herpi, who marched over burning coal to gain exemption from military service.

We are indebted to M. Boutigny for a philosophical explanation of the immunity experienced on passing the hand through melted lead or copper; this momentary incombustibility is to be attributed to the moisture of the skin * passing into the spheroidal state. "No particular precautions," says he, "appear necessary to prevent the disorganizing action of the incandescent matter, except to dismiss all fear, and to make the experiment with confidence. The hand should be passed with a moderated rapidity, and with steadiness, through the metal; otherwise, by a jerking or hurried motion, the repulsive force which exists in the incandescent body might be overcome and the contact with the skin take place. The experiment," he adds, "although dangerous in appearance, is almost insignificant in reality." We have given the explanation in the words of M. Boutigny; we will now divest it of its technical phraseology, and state that the hand, when sufficiently moist, is, on its immersion, invested, as it were, with a jacket of steam which protects it during its short and rapid passage through the burning metal. M. Boutigny, however, adds, and we think wisely, that, although the involuntary dread that one feels on facing these masses of liquid fire almost always puts the body into that state of moisture so necessary to safety and success, still certain precautions may be advisable. "I rub my hands," says he, "with soap, so as to give them a polished surface; then, at the moment of making the experiment, I dip my hand into water containing some *sal ammoniac*, and, default of that, into pure water." In short, he takes care that his hand shall have an evaporable surface; when our young friends next play at *Snap-dragon*, it were well that this fact should be kept in remembrance, for truly, there is *Philosophy*, even in that Christmas *Sport*.

The extraordinary experiment of freezing water, or even quicksilver, in a red-hot crucible, loses all its mystery when the principles of science are brought to bear upon the process. Mr Faraday exhibited the freezing of quicksilver, by first introducing into the incandescent crucible some ether, and then a portion of solid carbonic acid; after these had passed into a spheroidal state, he dipped into it a small metal spoon, containing about four hundred grains of quicksilver, and in less than three seconds it was frozen.

Water may be thus frozen by the aid of sulphurous acid; and the ice so produced may be made to inflame by the contact of a grain or two of *potassium*.

To an unphilosophical observer, chemistry cannot present a greater marvel than the combustion of the metal *Potassium*, by coming into contact with water or ice; so that the miracle said to have been performed by St Patrick when a boy, of setting on fire a quantity of ice, might in the present day be repeated without the aid of saintly licence; while the exploit of "*setting the Thames on fire*," so long typified as the crowning accomplishment of human wisdom, may be now actually achieved by any mere chemical tyro.

VALETE.

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* Beckmann, on a visit to the copper-works at Awestad, saw a workman draw his hand over a ladle filled with melted copper, having previously held it for a few minutes under his arm-pit, as he said, "*to make it perspire*."

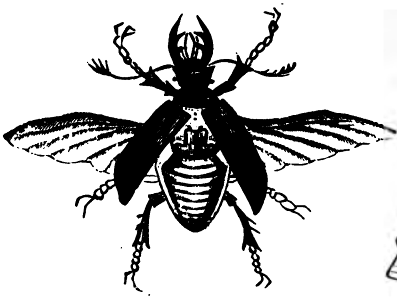
ADDENDA.

PAGE 172.

Cerf-Volant—The Kite.

HAMLET. "Do you see that cloud, that 's almost in shape like a camel?"
POLONIUS. "By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed."
HAM. "Methinks it is like a weasel."
POL. "It is backed like a weasel."
HAM. "Or like a whale?"
POL. "Very like a whale."

To enlighten the obscurity in which the Vicar confessed himself involved regarding the origin of the term "*Cerf-Volant*," as applied to the Kite, a correspondent in *Notes and Queries* informs us that it is significant of the STAG-BEETLE, (*Lucanus Cervus*, Linn.,) and, on the authority of Pierre Richelet, ("Dictionnaire de Langue Françoise: à Amsterdam, 1782,") that the boy's kite was named after that insect, as being "*Ludicra Scarabæi Lucani effigies.*" To recognise any similitude in the ordinary figure of the kite and in that of the horned beetle in question, certainly demands no small measure of the courtly pliancy of a Polonius; but although the likeness may fail with regard to the shape and figure, we are by no means prepared to say that it cannot be found in the peculiar character which marks the flight of that insect; for since it rises perpendicularly, and then shapes its course laterally, it may be thought somewhat to resemble the kite in its ascent, and in its subsequent movements in the air.



At page 240 in the text, will be found an allusion to several acoustic instruments, such as the trumpet, speaking tubes, &c., for the purpose of augmenting sounds, and for conveying them to a distance; such must have been the principal object of the *Mask* worn by the actors of the ancient theatre, or how are we otherwise to understand the meaning of that hideous exaggeration of the mouth, except as an organ for vocal purposes?—so vast, indeed, was the area through which the performer had to throw his voice, an area, as we are told, capable of holding 80,000 persons, that without some such contrivance, the actor could not have been heard. In confirmation of this opinion we may appeal to the etymologist; the word *Persona*, a Mask or Visor, comes from *personare*, to sound through. In further support of this opinion, we learn from Lucian, that the mask of the dancers, "*orchestrie*," or *mute*, as it was termed, was not disfigured by such an exaggeration of mouth, but was more natural and less repulsive.

NOTE 4, p. 343.

" *The Plurality of Worlds.*"

In addition to the statements in this note, we are anxious to observe, that Cornelius Agrippa, in his Satirical Essay on the varieties of Sciences and Arts, speaks of the opposite opinions held by philosophers respecting the *Plurality of Worlds;* that "Empedocles said there was one world, but that it was a small particle only of the universe—that Metrodorus, a disciple of Democritus, and after him, Epicurus, thought there were innumerable worlds, because the causes of them were innumerable;" and he concludes with the following striking illustration—"*It was not less absurd to think that, amidst the universe of stars, there should be only one world, than to imagine but one ear of corn in a whole corn-field!*"

THE END.

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